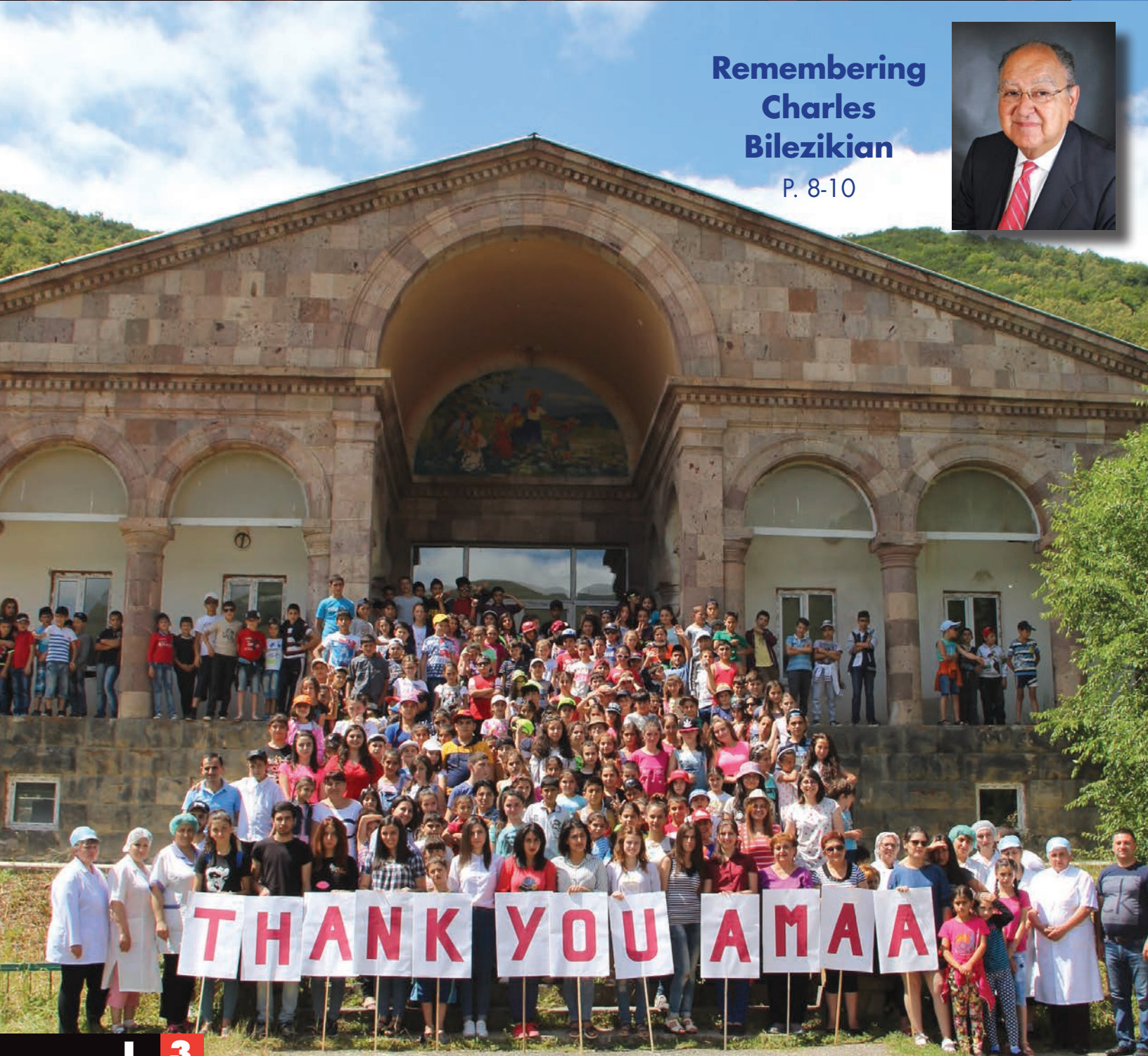




Remembering
Charles
Bilezikian
P. 8-10



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July-Aug-Sept
2016

Camp Sheen Shoghig
Hankavan, Armenia



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The Armenian Missionary Association of America

25 Years in Armenia and Going...

"...and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat." **Genesis 8:4**

By Zaven Khanjian

That was Noah entering Armenia. We came later. The AMAA's first encounter with Soviet Armenia came right after the devastating December 1988 Earthquake. The nation and the world spontaneously mobilized to reach out and help. The Armenian American reaction could not have been different. It was unprecedented and overwhelming. A reaction that rose to the magnitude of the tragedy. Perhaps we all have distinct memories of that tragic day, how we heard of the killer earthquake and how we reacted.

In an interesting and obscure succession, the Earthquake was one of three pivotal events that marked Armenian history of the era. In February 1988, Nagorno Karabagh rocked the Soviet Union with a massive Armenian nationalist movement demanding self-determination for the Armenian enclave forcibly placed within Azerbaijan by Joseph Stalin. The third event was the disintegration of the Soviet Union, culminating in line with other Soviet republics with the declaration of an independent Republic of Armenia in September 1991.

Armenia had become center stage for all Armenians. Despite the fact that we had no input in the realization of our collective dreams; despite the fact that independence confused us for awhile; we were jubilant. We had our place in the league of nations. We raised our heads in dignity and pride and saluted the tricolor. We built a nation and created a country from the ashes of the Soviet system. We bore the shock therapy of moving from a totally centralized socialist economy to a radical free capitalistic system; from an atheist system that persecuted believers to a society which created an unprecedented opportunity to resurrect the faith of our fathers in the land of a nation which embraced Christianity in 301 AD.

Armenia was surely center stage for all Armenians.

In one of his very early trips to Armenia, then AMAA Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, reflecting on the changes witnessed in Armenia, concluded, "Armenia therefore, should top the list of our priorities and become the focal point of our missionary endeavors."



And focal point it has been for the past 25 years.

The road has not been all that rosy as Armenia faced the challenges of tumultuous times fighting a liberation war in Artsakh (and winning), experiencing sky rocketing unemployment, extreme poverty, economic paralysis, mass migration, the rise of oligarchs and widespread corruption.

Our focal point has not shaken!

Year after year, AMAA Armenia Relief budgets have soared to new highs, human resources have multiplied. Our programs and ministries have and continue to cultivate the spirit of goodness in the individual, young or adult, raise it to its potential, anchor hope and fortify the faith. We continue to help the search for talents, inspire dreams and aspirations, encourage young discoveries and place them on a path to success. Our Sunday schools, camps and Christian Endeavor programs 'train the child in the way he should go' to grow up embodying the new citizen embracing the beginning of wisdom, 'the fear of the Lord.' AMAA ministries preach the Gospel and teach about 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' for whoever 'will know the truth, the truth will set him free.'

Our focal point has not shaken!

Our vision of the new citizen is one of indelible integrity, upholding the highest moral values and unblemished reputation; unafraid to advocate social justice, freedom of conscience, expression or speech; a citizen who exercises voluntarism, sustains society, respects human rights and sacrifices for the Homeland; a citizen who loves the Lord and reflects His love around.

Our focal point has not shaken!

Today, as we parade the road of independence and our mission in the Homeland, celebrate our achievements, learn from our experiences and plan the path of the future, we like to halt for a moment and hail the visionaries who conceived the pioneer AMAA program in Armenia - the Orphan and Child Care Committees of yesterday and today. Angelic women, who through

incredible ingenuity and humble and silent sacrifices have touched the lives of thousands over the years, raising the fallen, healing the sick, providing to the impoverished, reconstructing shattered lives, resurrecting broken dreams.

Join us on October 8 in Los Angeles as we revere and honor this group of epic women who never give up reinventing themselves in the service of the Lord and support of Armenian children.

We have faith in the future of Armenia.

God's love was revealed in steering Noah's ark to the mountains of Ararat. His love is eternal and so is our commitment to the Homeland.

I ask you to support our mission today and in perpetuity. God bless! ☐



ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

CENTENNIAL KICK-OFF CELEBRATION

Honoring

The Child and Orphan Care Committee

Saturday, October 8, 2016, 6:00PM

The Jonathan Club

545 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA

For details visit www.amaa.org



Armenian Evangelical World Council Salutes the Republic of Armenia

On September 21, the Republic of Armenia will mark the 25th Anniversary of its independence. It was on September 21, 1991 when the Armenian Nation was able to reestablish its place among the autonomous nations of the world by declaring its independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The road to independence was not easy. In 1915, the Ottoman Turks attempted to annihilate the Armenian people in a brutal Genocide. To this day, the Turkish government refuses to acknowledge the atrocities for what they were: a systematic Genocide. Not only were the Armenian people able to survive the Genocide, but also they kept our small nation alive. It was a great victory when the first Republic of Armenia was formed in 1918 following the Armenian Genocide. It was truly a historic event that exemplified strength and perseverance of the Armenian people in pursuit of freedom. But again, the Republic of Armenia lost its independence when it was taken over by the Soviet Union in 1920, and later became a Soviet Republic of the USSR.

Suffering through seven decades of totalitarian dictatorship did not discourage the Armenian people. It never wavered in its pursuit to secure freedom and to be a democratic nation of its own. Thus, following the collapse of the USSR, Armenia was among the first of the former Soviet republics to embrace the path of democratic change in pursuit of freedom and self-determination. This was a rebirth of the independent state of Armenia and a historic moment for an oppressed country. It was a cause of celebration for Armenians around the world.

As one of the first countries in post-Soviet Union to embrace the ideals of freedom and democracy, Armenia has taken great strides down the path of democratic change and development and, to a large extent, has proven its commitment to democratic values.

At the present time, however, one of the greatest challenges that the Armenian Republic faces is the hostility of its neighbors, particularly Turkey and Azerbaijan. Since the independence of Nagorno Karabagh—known as Artsakh—these two nations have imposed a crippling and illegal economic blockades against Armenia.

In spite of the fact that both Armenia and Artsakh have demonstrated their commitment to a peaceful resolution to the conflict, Azerbaijan has taken reckless steps that have contributed to instability to the region.

On the 25th Anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia, The Armenian Evangelical World Council salutes our Fatherland, and remains committed to support it in every possible way.

God bless Armenia and long live the Armenian nation!

Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Executive Director
Armenian Evangelical World Council

Where Have You Come From and Where Are You Going?

By **Rev. Gilbert Léonian***

The celebration of a birthday very often allows us to take a break and look back on our lives. 170 years after the birth of the Armenian Evangelical Churches, we have reached a stage that gives us a real opportunity to stop and consider the two questions that God asked Agar in Genesis 16:8: "Where have you come from and where are you going?"



Where have you come from?

In Deuteronomy 8:2, "God tells his people: Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way ..."

There is also a well-known proverb: "If you want to know where you are headed, remember where you came from."

If I forget or reject my spiritual roots, in the family or in the nation, I will not find my identity or prosper in life. I shall slowly shrivel up. And a tree without roots is destined to die. Our prime responsibility is to be aware of, cultivate and pass on to the younger generations the history and development of the Armenian Evangelical Churches, from their inception to the present day.

What drove those 40 believers to set up this Church and endure the persecutions which followed? What were their theological foundations? How did they become strong in the practice of their faith?

In what way did this evangelical faith mold their character, their family life and their commitment in the social, economic and educational spheres? How did this faith, Christ centered and rooted in the authority of the Bible and its teachings, lead to the creation throughout Turkey of churches, schools, hospitals, dispensaries and theological seminaries, and to the publishing of good quality Christian books and magazines?

How did these churches live through and survive the great tragedy of the 1915 Genocide? How did they manage to reestablish themselves in the 24 countries of the Diaspora despite this traumatic experience?

How did they succeed in reorganizing and thriving in Armenia and Karabagh after 70 years of atheistic sovietization? How did the many missions and charities like the AMAA, soon to commemorate its centenary, get started and develop?

Where are you going?

Our past, our history, and our journey have been rich, dynamic and stimulating. But we must not look back with longing to previous generations. Our generation must make its contribution so that our churches keep moving forward in their calling. A legacy is only meaningful if it is utilized and made to grow.

Let us each ask ourselves, honestly, wherever we are: "Where are we now with regard to the spirituality and outreach of the Armenian Evangelical faith?" Where are we going? What is our vision, what is our strategy for the coming two, five or ten years until the 180th Anniversary (if our Lord Jesus Christ has not returned by then)?

Of course conditions vary from one country or continent to another, depending on whether you live in the U.S.A., France, Lebanon or Armenia. The situation of our fellow Armenians in Syria and Iraq is profoundly distressing to us, plunging us into the deepest dismay.

But we must not give up. We must be strong and resolute. Christ is the head of His Church. Let us remind ourselves that our Churches were born on July 1, 1846 out of a movement for spiritual revival within our Mother Church.

I remain convinced that our greatest need and the greatest challenge facing us on this 170th Anniversary, whether we are church leaders or church members, is to give ourselves over to a thoroughgoing spiritual awakening, both in our personal faith and as a community.

"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you..." Those are the words of the Apostle Paul to his young disciple, Timothy.

We live in an increasingly permissive society. The dividing line between a holy life and a worldly life of permissiveness and tolerance is ever narrowing. Our institutions are many and effective. But we must remember that they are only a means and not an end. The calling and goal of the Armenian Evangelical movement has always been and will continue to be the same: to live the Gospel of Christ Jesus in dedication and integrity, announcing the salvation message zealously and sincerely to all beings so that they may become disciples of Jesus, saved by grace.

A return to these fundamental principles will give great force to our witness among the Armenian people and in our respective adoptive countries. That is the price that has to be paid for our churches to grow in spiritual quality, and quantitatively through the new people who will turn to Christ. Let us shine in this world of darkness like torches spreading the light of Christ! □

**Rev. Gilbert Léonian is the Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Alfortville and Arnouville (France), Editor of the Panper magazine, and President of the Armenian Evangelical Fellowship of Europe.*

Meet Our Veteran Pastors:

Gilbert Bilezikian, Th.D.

By Louisa Janbazian

Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian, affectionately renamed "Dr. B" by his students, was born to Genocide survivors who escaped to France from their native town of Marash, Turkey. His maternal grandfather was Pastor Garabed Kupelian, one of the nineteen ministers and missionaries who were killed on their way to a church convention near Adana in 1909. A native of Paris, he received his B.A. from the University of Paris. He then went to Boston to obtain the M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and his Th.D. from Boston University. He has also pursued a seven year post-doctoral program at the Sorbonne in Paris under Professor Oscar Cullmann.

Dr. Bilezikian's professional life began in Paris where he taught seven years at the European Bible Institute while serving as Minister of Christian Education at the American Church in Paris. In 1961 he came to the United States and served for five years as Pastor of the Loudonville Community Church in Albany, New York. He then joined the Wheaton College faculty where he taught for twenty years until his retirement. In 1968, Dr. Bilezikian interrupted his tenure at Wheaton College to assume the position of the presidency of Haigazian College in Beirut, Lebanon, after which he taught for two years at Trinity College in Deerfield, Illinois before returning to Wheaton College.

"The call to go to Beirut and join Haigazian College came inauspiciously while the 1967 'Six Day War' raged in the Middle East," says Dr. Bilezikian. "I was then happily ensconced in the academic life of a tranquil Midwestern university in the United States." As Haigazian College needed an administrator who was an Armenian, Protestant and Evangelical, who spoke English, Armenian and French, who knew American and European educational systems, who had the necessary academic credentials and whose professional experience spanned the continents, the California-based Haigazian Board of Trustees convinced him to take the position.

The political turmoil that prevailed during that time in the Middle East had deep repercussions on the campus of Haigazian College and some students became politically radicalized. They started publishing inflammatory underground papers and tried to organize demonstrations of a terrorist nature on the campus. As Dr. Bilezikian opposed attempts to turn the campus into a political battleground, he received death-threats from the extremists who were frustrated in their attempts to gain control of the College. Fortunately, the Students Government stood firmly on the administration's side to protect the academic integrity of the College. It was during this time that the Bilezikian's nine year old daughter, Christiane, was shot in the back while playing on her school grounds. Fortunately, the injury was not fatal. But, as a result of this and similar incidents, Dr. Bilezikian took his family back to the United States and returned to Beirut alone to continue his service at Haigazian until 1971. At that point, Dr. John Markarian, the founding President of the College, graciously agreed to assume its presidency. again

During Dr. Bilezikian's time in Beirut, the administrative structure of Haigazian College was consolidated, the scholarship program

was expanded, the finances of the college were managed on a secure basis, the faculty was upgraded, a Faculty Manual was produced to standardize teaching and grading procedures, the weekly campus paper, *Haigazian Herald*, started to be published and a Student Manual was instituted. As the student body grew, finding additional space became a priority. A magnificent building across the street, formerly occupied by the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), was vacant. With the help of the Stephen Mugar Foundation, it finally became possible to purchase it, to move the library to the new building and to create more classroom space. This purchase was successfully finalized under Dr. Markarian's administration soon after Bilezikian's departure from Beirut.

Dr. Bilezikian is also a founding leader of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois, one of the fastest-growing and most innovative churches in the nation. He has been called the "most forceful advocate of the church as community on the current religious scene." An important part of Dr. Bilezikian's life-ministry has been his advocacy for the recognition of women's gifts and participation in leadership on the basis of their ability to serve, as a condition for community to function biblically.

As a professional theologian and a church growth expert, Dr. Bilezikian has been frequently asked to lead seminars and to lecture both in the United States and abroad. The AMAA called upon him to teach and conduct seminars in the late 1990s, including the worldwide celebrations of the 150th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Paris. He was the speaker at the convention of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East which was held in Anjar, Lebanon. He also taught three non-consecutive semesters at the AMAA's Evangelical Theological Academy in Yerevan, Armenia, and he still mentors some of the former students of the Academy. He has also preached frequently from the pulpits of Armenian Evangelical Churches, especially in California, Boston, Canada, Australia, Lebanon, Armenia, Belgium and France. A congenial tradition that started in 1974 and which is still continuing to this day has Dr. Bilezikian bring the message at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago every Palm Sunday.

In addition to numerous articles, Dr. Bilezikian is the author of *The Liberated Gospel* (1977), *Beyond Sex Roles* (1985), *Eglise, ouvre-toi!* (1991), *Christianity 101* (1993), and *Community 101* (1997). His books have been translated into several languages. In 1992, he became Professor of Biblical Studies Emeritus of Wheaton College where he also received the unique distinction of being awarded the citation of *Professor of the Year* twice, just ten years apart.

Currently, Dr. Bilezikian and his wife Maria live in Wheaton, Illinois. They have four adult children and two grandchildren, John-Michel and Sophie. □

(Sources used – Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian's bio 12/01 and AEUNA Forum Spring 2000 - Haigazian College Recollections)



In Memoriam: Charles Bilezikian 1937 - 2016

Charles Bilezikian

An Intimate Portrait of a Good Man



By **Gilbert Bilezikian, Th.D.**

In 1947, having emerged alive from the horrors of World War II, I was finishing my undergraduate work at the University of Paris. My uncle, Krikor Bilezikian, who had emigrated from our ancestral home in Marash just before the Genocide, had established himself in Newton, MA, an "American Dream" suburb of Boston. Upon learning that I wanted to go to seminary, he wrote and graciously proposed for him and his family to host me while I would attend Gordon Divinity School and then Boston University as a graduate foreign student.

He was there on the pier when I disembarked from a disaffected Liberty-ship troop-transport at New York harbor, just past the Statue of Liberty on Christmas Eve of that year. The drive to Boston in his spacious and heated Plymouth through a heavy snowstorm remains unforgettable. All through the night, I would watch in wonder at the windows and homes brightly decorated for the holiday. At a diner stop in a city with the evocative name of New Haven, my uncle caught me as I was surreptitiously stuffing my pockets with left-over rolls. With tears in his eyes, he said gently, "Son, you don't need to do that. There is plenty of bread in this land."

I quickly discovered that there was also plenty of love. His wife Beatrice, from the large Kasparian clan in Dorchester, became like a tender mother to me. The two children, a strikingly graceful teenage girl called Nancy and the adolescent Charlie, ten years my junior, soon adopted me as their older brother.

Getting to know Charlie was easy since he was impetuously outgoing and we were roommates. All the young people I had known in my native France had been deeply marked by the vicissitudes of war and of the Nazi occupation. For the first time, I could observe a young boy who was not bitter and beaten-down by the hardships of hunger and deprivations. He was inventive, free-spirited, full of

energy and inexhaustibly sociable. He had a collection of toys in the basement that I marveled at, including a functioning model gas engine that fit in the palm of my hand. A large built-in bin at the top of the back-door stairs was full of his sports equipment, things that I had never seen before, like ice-hockey skates and sticks, boots and cleats made for children, helmets, bats and mitts, balls of all shapes and sizes. Patiently, my cousin initiated me to the youth culture of middle-class America. He taught me how to skate at Bulloughs Pond in his neighborhood while I helped him sort out and resolve a conflict with his best friend Roger, and to locate the five continents on a map of the earth for his geography class.

Where I had come from, the use of the telephone was exclusively an adult function. For the first time, I observed a child who had leave to call the operator at will and request connections like a grown-up. Charlie was at the strategic center of a vast network of friends, relatives of his age and, later, of girlfriends. I could appreciate the fact that they were attracted to him for his warmth and good humor, for his loyalty and dependability. By the time I left America to return to France and to a totally different kind of a life, Charlie had become a handsome young man with an engaging smile, exuding stability and self-confidence. At the time of my departure, I remember putting my hand firmly on his shoulder, like his equal, and commending him to the guidance and protection of our God.

It was years later that I returned to the States with my youthful wife Maria and our four children to accept a prestigious teaching position. Charlie and I recognized each other as if no time had elapsed. Same boyish grin and affable manner. Except that now he had become a respected businessman and his first name had changed to Chuck. He introduced me to his cute and quietly efficient wife Doreen and to her body guards, their two

stalwart sons named Gregory and Jeffrey who looked like him in his youth.

He took me to visit one of the stores of the chain they were establishing in New England. It seemed to function like a new concept for making household articles imported from all over the world available to middle class consumers. But as we were walking through the loaded aisles, I was a lot more interested to watch his interaction with his employees. He greeted each one cordially, like a long-lost relative, remembering their names and circumstances, asking about health and family, and treating them with respect as his equals.

Historians of culture have established that Armenians traditionally hold a high view of the family and that they generally honor family commitments. This proposition proved to be tragically true for Chuck. When his sister, my beloved cousin, Nancy died of cancer leaving her three daughters and one son orphans, I learned that he and Doreen cared for them as if they had adopted the youngsters. Years later, when I met them again, I discovered that they had been raised to become strong and independent adults thanks to the love that had been invested in them by their uncle Chuck and his spouse.

It was obviously the same esteem for his extended family that provided Chuck with the motivation to institute the annual families'

picnic at their vast seaside property on Cape Cod. As he anticipated transitioning from an intensely absorbing business life to retirement mode, Chuck felt the impulse to create a bond between both sides of his family, the Bilezikians on his father's side and the Kasparians on his mother's. At the approach of summer, we all received an invitation to gather for a day of friendship, fun and food at their farm. To identify each one's affiliation, baseball caps bearing the name of one of the two groups were provided for all upon arrival. For the hundreds who participated, the yearly occasions became cherished opportunities for community building. Old or young, and especially the latter, will treasure the memories of Chuck's family picnics for a long time to come.

He will be remembered not only for the impact of a generous and caring spirit but also for his rich legacy of educational and medical institutions he established in the Middle East and in the Republic of Armenia. In gratitude for the goodness he had received in life, he believed in the calling with which he had been entrusted to create a Foundation that would make resources available to alleviate needs and distress among the destitute of our world. This dimension of his benevolence was amply documented in an earlier issue of the AMAA News. □

A Tribute to **Charles Bilezikian**

Good Morning,

Our gathering this morning, in this House of God, aims to pay our last respects and bid farewell to an exceptional man I came to know better since I moved to Paramus, New Jersey. I came to know Chuck better, through his faithful service to God and to the Armenian people in partnership with the Armenian Missionary Association of America as a past Board member and an esteemed Benefactor hand in hand with his graceful wife, Doreen.

As I thought more about the idea of bidding farewell, it sank on me that a closer look at the global landscape of the AMAA's services and ministry in Armenia reminds us all, that at this threshold of AMAA's Centennial you cannot bid farewell to a man whose life has touched thousands of Armenia's children, continues to inject hope in them today and keeps the promise of hope alive for multitudes more as we move into the second century of AMAA's service to God and our people. Chuck's generosity, gallantry, loving and compassionate demeanor and big caring heart has radiated so much energy that has and will continue to carve smiles of joy and happiness on the faces of generations of our youth for years to come. No, it is hard to bid farewell to a man whose legacy will forever live in the decades old Bilezikian School and the newly established Day Center in Shoushi, Karabagh or in the lives of the elementary children of the Avedisian School in the impoverished Malatia-Sepastia District of Yerevan, Armenia, Camp Shoghig in Hankavan, the Center in Gyumri, and the dental clinic and other missions and ministries in Armenia. It is indeed hard, very hard, to bid farewell to Chuck.

Chuck was a man of indelible integrity, ever present wit, patience, wise listening discipline and genuine humility. With these characteristics on hand, Chuck was able to win the respect, confidence, trust and love of all those he associated with.

Two weeks ago, we laid to rest another servant of God who had been at the helm of the Armenian Missionary Association of America for many decades, Albert Momjian, Esq. In his address at the AMAA's 75th Anniversary Banquet which coincided with his Presidency, talking about an ever changing world like the one we are experiencing today and the necessity of rethinking goals and objectives of the organization and our vision for the future, Mr. Momjian said, "Throughout the past 75 years and as long as the AMAA continues to exist, we are fortunate in having one constant. That constant is the Lord and our guiding star is service to God." Chuck was a solid believer of that constant as being the core mission of the AMAA and was keen to apply it in all that

he initiated, planned, created and implemented through the organization. God was always the constant Chuck believed in, served and instilled that faith in others.

During the decades and long life lived together, I would think the Bilezikian family has come to learn the meaning of that famous Marashtsi last name, Bilezik. Bilezik translates into bracelet. A bracelet surrounds and embraces an arm to hold it firm and give support. It is also a treasure to hold on and holding more of it is increased treasure. There is an Armenian saying that goes "Learn a trade or a profession and it will always remain a golden bracelet for you." The Bilezikians, Doreen and Chuck, have lived up to their name and have been the golden bracelet embracing and enriching the communities they've lived in and loved, the children in the Homeland, Armenia and humanity at large.

The Bilezikians believed in the mission of the AMAA and trusted it which led to numerous partnerships in various AMAA ministries. Today, because of the family's immense contribution to that legacy, the AMAA continues to be one of the best Armenian philanthropic organizations. And the truth is that the AMAA is what it is and where it is because of that gracious and gallant giving spirit that has been Chuck and Doreen Bilezikian.

On behalf of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, its President, Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, and my wife Sona, I would like to extend our deepest condolences to Doreen Bilezikian, sons Jeffery and Gregory and their entire families.

It is true that America is a country of opportunities where many have worked hard, believed in the American Dream, achieved it and over time amassed fortunes. Many have reached that pinnacle but only a few, very few, in the truest Christian spirit, have found their joy, and enjoyed the satisfaction and happiness of sharing that fortune with others. Chuck and Doreen are on top of that handful, revered, respected and loved.

We praise God for Chuck's life. May he rest in peace.

Zaven Khanjian
First Armenian Church, Belmont, MA
July 29, 2016

Around the Globe

The Armenian Evangelical Churches of Istanbul

"First, to rebuild, repair or furnish the church edifices and parochial schools that have been destroyed and robbed during the war."

"Second, to secure and send trained body of pastors and teachers from America, to furnish the sorely needed native competent leadership."

"Third, to furnish healthy and inspiring literature."

These are the headlines from a pamphlet that the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) published in 1919 when it embarked on a major capital campaign to raise half a million dollars to support the Armenian Evangelical Churches and Schools in historic Armenia.

Between 1846 and 1920, there were about 272 churches and 414 schools in historic Armenia which needed financial and moral



The Armenian Evangelical Holy Trinity Church of Pera in Beyoglu.

support to rebuild, repair and encourage the local leadership. However, after World War I, Armenia lost its independence (the first republic of 1918-1920), and the survivors of the Genocide who had started to return to their homes in historic Armenia once again experienced massacres. Those who survived were deported. Out of the existing 272 Armenian Evangelical Churches and 414 schools, today there are only two surviving Armenian Evangelical churches and they are in Istanbul. Both churches are active members of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE).

The Armenian Evangelical Holy Trinity Church of Pera was founded in 1846 in the Beyoglu area of the city where most Armenians resided at the time. This was the first Armenian Evangelical Church which was established on July 1, 1846. The Church's first Pastor was Apisoghom Utujian, who was succeeded by his brother Simon Utujian. The Church building unfortunately was bombed and it took several years (until 1904) to obtain permission from the government authorities to buy a plot and build a new sanctuary. The new building was dedicated in 1907. This Church, which once had a glorious history of evangelism, today, unfortunately, has a dwindling number of parishioners.

Nevertheless, the Church still continues to serve its community with a visible outreach. Currently Sona Özpenbe serves the Church as Preacher. Ohannes Torkumoglu, a dedicated Deacon and Chairman of the Church Council, provides much care and leadership to the Church. The AMAA continues its support to this Church through the UAECNE and also sends Christian literature.

The Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa is a very active Church with four Sunday worship services. One is in the Turkish language for Turkish Christians, one in Turkish for Armenians, one in Armenian for Armenian immigrants from Armenia and one in Persian for the Persian Christian Community. The Pastor of the Church is Rev. Kirkor Ağabaloğlu. The Church of Gedik Paşa was founded in 1850 as the second church of Istanbul. It first started its worship services in homes, until 1854 when an old house was purchased. In 1880 another property was purchased, but all efforts to secure a permit to build a sanctuary resulted in failure. The permit to build a church was finally granted in 1911. Unfortunately, the building project was

not completed because of World War I. The construction was completed in 1950.

At the time the Church also had an elementary school which unfortunately ceased to operate in 1979 due to lack of funds and also because the authorities refused to permit repairs. Another initiative of the Church was the establishment of the Istanbul Youth Home where young girls and boys from the inner provinces of

Turkey were brought and taught the Armenian language and Armenian heritage, and at the same time were given spiritual instruction.

In 1962 the church bought a plot of land in Tuzla district to build a summer camp. The construction was completed in 1963 and it was called Camp ARMEN. The Camp was operational until 1985 when certain properties belonging to churches were taken over by the State.

We thank God that after much struggle the Camp was recently returned to its rightful owner, the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa. Today, the Church has a much more visible outreach than ever. Christian literature and Bibles are distributed to the

public. The pastor preaches from the radio. Many Christian converts participate in worship services. Children of immigrant families from Armenia who cannot attend or cannot afford to attend school, come to Church where they learn how to read and write and at the same time learn about the Bible and their Armenian Christian heritage. Recently the Church has accomplished much needed renovations.

Some of the prominent pastors who have served the Gedik Paşa Church in the past are its first Pastor Avedis Baghdassarian, Parsegh Vartoukian, Stepan Utujian, D. Megerditchian, Nazareth Alexandrian, Haygouni and Prof. Hagopos Jezizian, Avedis Assadourian, Arakel Bedigian, Krikor Dombalian, Hovsep Jezizian, Yeghia Kassouni, Sarkis Manougian and Garabed DerHovhannessian.

The major problem these two churches face is the dwindling number of the Armenian community in the neighborhood. At one time, these areas were mostly inhabited by Armenians. However, most of them have now moved, making it hard for the churches to survive.

As we celebrate the 170th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church, let us keep these churches in our prayers more than ever. □



The Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa.

AMAA Executive Director/CEO Visits Mission Fields in Turkey, Lebanon and Armenia



By Zaven Khanjian

Ten years ago, on our maiden trip to historic Armenia, my wife Sona and I flew to Istanbul from Yerevan. My diary reflects "I don't know of any other case on the globe where two neighboring countries, whose mutual border is closed and who do not enjoy diplomatic relations, have several regular weekly flights connecting them."

'Deja vu' as the French will say. Once again, the very early morning flight is taking us to Istanbul from Yerevan. The plane is full and most travellers are Armenian citizens doing business with or in Turkey. The late Hrant Dink, with whom we forged a very close relationship ten years ago, is not on the plane this time. But it did not take long in the day to come across Hrant again, this time at the Gedik Paşa Armenian Evangelical Church School that bears his name.

Indeed, children of Armenian citizens who are illegally employed in Turkey are not accepted in public schools nor are they allowed to enroll in the Istanbul Armenian schools. Thus, in the same church basement where over 50 years ago the audacious Hrant Guzelian embarked on "The Youth Home of Istanbul" with his daring search and rescue mission of children of the remnants of the Genocide survivors, including Hrant Dink and his two brothers, another courageous servant of God, Rev. Kirkor Ağabaloğlu, has come to the rescue of today's children. He has established this educational institution, where around 160 children, grades K-8, follow the Republic of Armenia's educational curriculum and are nurtured with the word of God.

The Gedik Paşa Church was our second stop of the day as we walked the narrow streets of the old city after paying a courtesy visit to the General Vicar of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, H.E. Archbishop Aram Ateshian accompanied by Rev. Ağabaloğlu.

The Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, established in 1461, has had a crucial role in the life of the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. The current Patriarch, Archbishop Mesrob Mutafyan, who suffers from a serious illness, has been unable to carry his duties which are being carried out by the General Vicar Archbishop Ateshian.

During my various encounters around the globe, I have come to gladly observe that the AMAA and its mission is widely acknowledged and respected. Archbishop Ateshian was not an exception as we discussed the challenges that the church and our people face in the region. We thanked the Archbishop for the cordial welcome and the tour of the Patriarchate that followed and invited him to honor the AMAA with a visit to the Paramus headquarters on a future visit to the United States.

Despite maintaining the traditional tiny denominational percentage in terms of numbers, the impact of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Istanbul is far greater in the life of the community. Both at the Gedik Paşa Church and the historic Holy Trinity Church in Pera, Sunday worship services are in more than one language. While services in Armenian and Turkish seem logical and expected, the Gedik Paşa Church conducts four Sunday worship services, in Armenian, Turkish, Persian and Russian. The faithful in the various ethnic groups gather all day on Sunday praising God in the heavens and proclaiming His name.

There is more than church and school in store for us in the schedule of the ever busy Istanbul Armenian Evangelical life. Camp Armen! This is the focal point of our visit since the Camp was returned to its rightful owners last October.

A visit to the Camp and the damaged structures that witness the injustices experienced were very telling. But take heart, not only is the small Armenian Evangelical community dreaming about the reconstruction of the Camp and the resurrection of the mission but a wider, intercommunity committee is set to perpetuate the vision of Hrant Guzelian and plan on a modern facility that captures the soul of the community, serves multiple purposes and creates a new 'Atlantis' for future generations of Hrant Dinks.

We had the privilege of participating in one of the committee meetings, comprised of professionals, intellectuals, activists and the spiritual leadership of the Protestant church. Something good is being conceived which needs our prayers, support and blessings from heaven. The AMAA continues to closely follow the conceived plans at Camp Armen and wholeheartedly supports the active involvement of the community in this respect.

While in Istanbul we had the pleasure and privilege of visiting the offices of the 'Nor Zartonk' youth group, that led the sit in protests and camping at Camp Armen, resisting the demolition attempted in May 2015 until the Camp was returned to the Gedik Paşa Church in October. The zeal and spirit of this youth group in the most unfavorable political atmosphere they live in is not only applaudable but miraculous.

Warm and constructive was the atmosphere at the offices of the newspaper 'AGOS' and the Hrant Dink Foundation where we enjoyed a fruitful discussion of Armenian affairs in the Homeland and the Diaspora.

Years ago, at the height of his struggle and on November 5, 2006, Hrant Dink professed the following from the pulpit of the United Armenian Congregational Church in Los Angeles, CA. "And I have great hope that one day we will definitely repossess the Camp that they took away from us. Definitely!!" The Camp has been repossessed. We fervently pray that we collectively repossess the spirit of the mission as well. The AMAA, in the tradition of the past, stands ready. □



The newly inaugurated Gomidas Statue in the courtyard of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul.



Zaven and Sona Khanjian meet with Camp Armen Construction and Rehabilitation Committee in Istanbul. Seated in front are Rev. Kirkor Ağabaloğlu and Raket Dink.

ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

97th Annual Meeting Banquet

HONORING

ALBERT MOMJIAN, ESQ.
(POSTHUMOUSLY)

SET MOMJIAN
REV. DR. JOHN MARKARIAN

MUSICAL PROGRAM

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2016
6:00 PM RECEPTION, 7:00 PM DINNER

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Lebanon

Despite major demographic changes in the Armenian Diaspora, the Near East continues to constitute a major mission field for the Armenian Missionary Association of America. In our annual tradition, a team of AMAA representatives traveled to Lebanon last May to confer with the leadership of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE).

The AMAA team included Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, President, Dr. H. Steven Aharonian, Executive Committee member, Board members Joseph Stein and Berjouhy Barsoumian Gulesserian, Stephen Philibosian Foundation representative Joyce Stein, Near East Committee Co-Chair Herair Mouradian, Committee member Dr. Hasmig Baran and Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian. Veteran Near East Committee Co-Chair Louis Kurkjian, who has diligently led the mission for decades, was dearly missed this year.

On May 25 and 26, the AMAA representatives met with the members of the clergy and lay leaders of the UAECNE at the Union headquarters in Ashrafieh. UAECNE representatives included President Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian, Central Committee Chair Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, Vice Chair Rev. Harout Selimian, Treasurer Garbis Deyirmenjian, Secretary Rev. Soghomon Kilaghabian, Executive Secretary Rev. Salim Sabounji, Rev. Hrair Cholakian, Rev. Raffi Messerlian, Pastor Hagop Akbashian and Rev. Sevag Trashian.

The meetings focused on the cooperative roles of both the AMAA and the UAECNE in the diverse mission fields that the Armenian Evangelical community is engaged in Syria and Lebanon. The participants deliberated on the challenges faced in the five



Worship Service at the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church of Nor Amanos, Bourdj Hammoud, Lebanon.



Zaven Khanjian visits the offices of ARARAT Newspaper in Beirut, Lebanon.



Pictured with the representatives of UAECNE. L to R: Pastor Datev Basmajian, Pastor Sebouh Terzian, Rev. Hrayr Cholakian, Zaven Khanjian, Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian, Rev. Soghomon Kilaghabian, Rev. Salim Sabounji and Rev. Sevag Trashian.



Zaven Khanjian visits with Sevag Hagopian, Editor of Zartonk Daily Newspaper of Beirut, Lebanon.

educational institutions with special emphasis on the Armenian Evangelical School in Anjar, which embraces a fully subsidized boarding school in Lebanon. Other topics included social hardship in the community, church and congregation needs, support of youth camps and retreats, pastoral subsidies, social action services, medical needs, optimum use of owned properties, recruitment of pastoral candidates and other issues relating to the programs and ministries in the life of the mission partners in the Middle East.

Despite the serious consequences of the chronic political turmoil in the Middle East, the troubling armed conflict in neighboring war torn Syria, inpouring of refugees into Lebanon and the cumulative dire effect of all the above on the social and economic life of our community, dedicated leadership, faith in the mission and support from the AMAA sustains the various active institutions making up the fabric of community life in Lebanon.

Rev. Harout Selimian, President of the Armenian Evangelical Community in Syria, reported in detail on the communities in Syria and life in embattled Aleppo which continues to experience ongoing hikes in the level of violence and lack of safety and security, under inhuman medieval living conditions with lack of power or running water, sky rocketing inflation and scarcity of the most vital basic necessities. Despite the continuing trauma, God in His faithfulness has sustained our diminishing community in Aleppo where, under the heroic leadership of Rev. Selimian, the flock enjoys a remarkable level of educational, religious, cultural and social activity thanks to the spiritual, moral and financial support of AMAA donors.

Realizing that these are indeed tiring times, AMAA representatives commended Rev. Selimian for his courageous leadership of the flock and assured the community in Syria of continued support and sustenance until the dawn of peace on the Syrian horizon.

While in Lebanon, Mr. Khanjian met the three daily Armenian newspaper editors, Ani Yepremian of Ararat, Sevag Hagopian of Zartouk and Shahan Kandaharian of Aztag, to discuss issues of mutual concern relating to our communities in the Middle East and the Homeland Armenia and depicting AMAA's mission and ministries in these communities.

Accompanied by Rev. Karagoezian, Mr. Khanjian paid a courtesy visit to the new Armenian Catholic Patriarch Catholicos of Cilicia, His Beatitude Krikor Bedros XX Gabroyan. His Beatitude, familiar with AMAA's mission, inquired about its worldwide activities and impressed the visitors with his very pleasant, pious, witty and humble character reminding us of His Holiness, Pope Francis of the Roman Catholic Church.

On the two Sundays spent in Lebanon, the AMAA Executive Director/CEO worshiped and shared a message at the First Armenian Evangelical Church in Beirut and the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel church in Nor Amanos (Dora).

Mr. Khanjian and his wife Sona also paid a visit to the Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian School in Nor Marash, Bourj Hammoud where they were welcomed by Principal Vartouhy Balekjian and Rev. Raffi Messerlian, Pastor of the Nor Marash Church.

We pray for the Lord's blessings on our communities in the Middle East who have for a century been a spring of goodness providing leadership to the various communities dispersed all over the Diaspora. May the Lord sustain, bless and grow that spring and may His peace reign all over the area. □



Visit to the Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian School in Nor Marash.



L to R: Rev. Soghomon Kilaghbian, Dr. Hasmig Baran, Sam Rakoubian, Zaven Khanjian and Mrs. Lena Racoubian.



L to R: Zaven Khanjian, His Beatitude Krikor Bedros XX Gabroyan and Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian.

Armenia

In September 2016, Armenia will celebrate its 25th Anniversary of independence and under the auspices of the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC), Armenian Evangelicals will congregate in Yerevan, Armenia to celebrate the 170th Anniversary of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Constantinople on July 1, 1846.

The AMAA offices in Yerevan and Paramus, in collaboration with Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian, Executive Director of the AEWC, have for some time actively engaged in the planning of the September festivities which, parallel to a worldwide gathering of Armenian Evangelical pastors for a three-day pastoral retreat in Hankavan and an AMAA organized Armenia Tour, will constitute the global activities of the 170th Anniversary celebrations.

The May visit oversaw the anniversary celebration planning in Yerevan which also includes a dedication worship service at the newly erected Armenian Evangelical Church in Dilijan.

A Day in Gyumri

The construction of the new Church and Community Center in Gyumri, which commenced in July 2015, is progressing according to schedule and is due to be completed in the fall of 2017. A visit to the site together with AMAA Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian inspected the progress and made a few recommendations. AMAA Board member Hratch Sarkis of Brentwood, California diligently oversees the construction process. He has been on the job site on several occasions and plans on continued oversight of the physical construction process until completion.

Following a formal appointment, AMAA's Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian paid an official courtesy visit to Bishop Mikael Ajapahyan, Bishop of the Diocese of Shirak Province at the Gyumri Cathedral of the Holy Mother of God. The two hour meeting resulted in an improved understanding of interdenominational relations ending with the promise of a more constructive communication and better relationship between the churches.

The final stop of the day was a visit with the widow of a recently martyred soldier on the front lines of Karabagh. The widow, who was living in her parent's home in Gyumri, had just given birth to a baby who was born after the father was martyred during the Azeri assault in early April 2016. Encouraging words were expressed to the young widow, her needs were evaluated and all assistance that was needed was offered.

Meeting with Karekin Vehapar

For the second time in six months, on June 2, the Executive Director/CEO visited Etchmiadzin and met with H.H. Karekin II. The meeting was conducted in a cordial yet warm, constructive and friendly atmosphere. Discussions covered mutual relations both in Armenia and the Diaspora, the Gyumri community center project and the continuing interchurch dialogue. The meeting ended with Karekin Vehapar extending an invitation to attend Pope Francis's welcoming celebrations at the end of June. Formal invitations extended to the Armenian Evangelical leadership followed the same



At the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Yerevan. L to R: Abby Sarafian, AMAA Board member Ann K. Sarafian, AMAA Benefactor Sam Chekijian and Zaven Khanjian.



Visiting the construction site of the Gyumri Center.



Visiting with the widow of Hrach Vartanee Galstyan, a recently martyred soldier on the front lines of Karabagh.

day. Rev. Harout Selimian, President of the Armenian Evangelical Community in Syria was able to participate and represent the worldwide Armenian Evangelical community. We thank Karekin Vehapar for the gracious invitations extended and have enthusiastically witnessed the historic Papal visit to Armenia.

Meeting the ECA and AMAA

Attending to ECA business in Armenia, meetings were held with Rev. Gevorg Gasparyan, President of the Evangelical Church of Armenia, and a number of ECA ministers. AMAA operations and activities were also the subject of discussion with the senior staff of the AMAA in Armenia and Karabagh. A detailed review and discussion of the proposed 2016-2017 AMAA Armenia budget was on the agenda.

Avedisian School

Paying a visit to the Avedisian School created an opportunity to inspect the construction of an architecturally stylish and beautiful new fence and the new walkway due to be completed in time for the opening bell of the new school year. School Principal Melanya Geghamyan was on hand to greet the guests while the student body was seriously engaged in their year-end exams. While School benefactor and AMAA Board member Edward Avedisian was in Yerevan, a meeting was convened with the architect, contractor, project manager and engineer of the Avedisian School construction team to wrap up and finalize pending matters relating to the School.

In early June, Senior Partner Todd Polyniak of the AMAA audit firm SaxBST, wrapped up his field audit of AMAA operations in Armenia. AMAA Finance Director David Aynejian, AMAA Armenia Representative Harout Necessian and Mr. Khanjian, reviewed the preliminary report covering the special Armenia operations audit that had just been conducted.

Mr. Khanjian paid a courtesy visit to the Minister of Diaspora, HE Hranush Hakobyan, met representatives of Syrian Armenian students studying in Yerevan. He attended an Avedisian School student presentation of Hagop Baronian's "The Honorable Beggars," supervised and directed by the talented Syrian Armenian play writer, author, actor and art director Hagop Mikaelian. School benefactors Edward and Pamela Avedisian were in attendance.

On June 4, Mr. Khanjian and his wife, Sona, attended the 2016 AUA graduation ceremonies followed by the University's 25th Anniversary Banquet.



Students take their final exams at Avedisian School.



Zaven Khanjian visits with the RA Minister of Diaspora, HE Hranush Hakobyan

The AMAA mission in Armenia has been a blessing to the Homeland for the past 25 years. We thank God for his love and goodness as we perpetuate our mission in the Homeland. □



Zaven Khanjian thanks members of the theatrical group of the Avedisian School after a special performance.

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KHOREN AND SHOOSHANIG AVEDISIAN
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CENTER



AMAA Interns In Armenia

By Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian

I was very pleased to be asked to plan, organize and lead this year's AMAA Internship Program July 5-19 to Armenia along with Tamar Melkonian (Fresno, CA) and Sevag Bakalian (Philadelphia, PA). The purpose of the Program is to give young adults from our churches in the United States, Canada, Europe and the Middle East an opportunity to learn about and appreciate the many ministries of the AMAA and the Evangelical Churches of Armenia (ECA) in Armenia. The Program is also designed to be a time of personal spiritual growth through daily Bible study, discussion, prayer and evaluation sessions, and an exposure to some significant historical, religious and cultural sites.

The 18 interns (Armenia 2, Lebanon 2, Canada 2, USA 12), who bonded with each other very quickly and very well, actively participated in the day-to-day program and praised God for witnessing AMAA's and ECA's ministries for the children, youth, adult, elderly, and poor of Armenia. Also, I would like to commend the interns for practicing one of the Bible study lessons, which was "Christianity is a two-way street—we do not just receive, but also give." One night, from their own money, they collected and purchased a lap top computer for one of

the ECA churches and pledged to sponsor a first grade elementary student for the next twelve years.

In closing, I will kindly ask that we pray that the good seeds that were planted in the hearts and minds of these interns may grow and bear fruits of lifelong vision and commitment to minister in Jesus' name.

Here are excerpts of some of the interns' experiences.

I cannot put into words how appreciative I am for such an amazing experience. Growing up in the Arm. Evang. Church community, I have been familiar with the AMAA and some of its work. However, after being part of this Program, I am happily surprised by how dedicated the AMAA and the ECA are in their work to strengthen Armenian communities. While every day was noteworthy, one moment stood out the strongest in my mind. My church, Calvary Arm. Cong. Church in San Francisco, is paired with a church in Armavir and we were able to spend some time at the Armavir Church. I felt welcomed with open arms and especially connected to this church family. I loved spending time out on the covered patio (that my church helped build!), and bonding with their youth. I felt blessed to be part of

the Armavir church family—even for just one afternoon. (Rebecca Sagherian)

This year's AMAA Internship taught me how involved the AMAA is within the daily lives of men, women and children of Armenia. The AMAA provides education, social work, dental care and many more necessary services to those in need. Some of the ministries we visited had so little materially, but provided so much spiritually. To see this, and how content these Armenians are to allow Christ to lead their lives, was truly an eye opening experience. I thank our gracious God for the AMAA and ECA for bringing our group together. Through our burning passion for Christ, we interns can call each other family. (Shant Poladian)

Growing up in the Armenian community, the AMAA was an organization I heard a lot about. But it was not until this trip that I learned what the AMAA really does. Personally, visiting the pastors, schools and institutions supported in Armenia was a valuable experience. A highlight was the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School. The facilities were impressive, and the School seemed capable of empowering its students to success and leadership. I was charmed by its

people, sights and way of life. Going on the Internship was a great decision and the trip was truly unforgettable. I would like to thank AMAA and its donors for providing such an amazing opportunity. (Luke Momjian)

I want to start off with my first highlight, the trip to Vernisaj (a large outdoor market). I love markets where I get to see what unique things people have to put out. My second highlight is the joint youth group we had with ECA youth. We discussed, in small groups, the challenges youth in Armenia and the US face. My third highlight is the visit to Avedisian School, which absolutely blew me away by its highlights and facilities. I really did not know much about the AMAA coming in. I learned about the history, goals and areas of operation and especially witnessed the difference the AMAA makes in Armenia and how they witness to Christ. (Nicholas Manoukian)

I am so blessed that I had the opportunity to partake in AMAA's Internship Program to Armenia, the Motherland. I had the chance to experience all the culture that Armenia had to offer. I was also able to help out with the art and crafts leaders at Camp Hankavan. Everywhere I went, the children always looked so lively and happy. They always said thank you and had a smile on their faces. Thanks to the AMAA, I was able to meet new people on this trip who are now dear friends of mine. I also feel like I have grown stronger in my faith as a believer of God. I will forever cherish the memories I have had along with my friends and God. (Stefan Balakji)



The Interns at the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Dzidzernagapert.

Two weeks with a group from different parts of the USA, Canada, Lebanon and Armenia were full of daily devotionals, sightseeing, fellowship and ministry. We were also acquainted with the ministries of the AMAA and ECA through visitations and seminars, which were very impressive and eye-opening. One of the highlights of my trip was the 2 days we spent in Camp Hankavan. It was impressive to see how well the leaders had organized and prepared the programs for the kids, and how they were able to pass on the message of Christ's love in creative ways. My favorite part of the Camp was the time of worship and I was happy to have the chance of leading one session with another intern. This Internship will leave a long term impact on my life. I would like to thank the AMAA and ECA for hosting us, and to Badveli Avedis

Boynerian and the leaders for leading us in a smooth and caring way. This experience was unforgettable in which I made new friends, and grew one more step in my faith. (Talar Haidostian)

I joined the 2016 AMAA Summer Internship under the leadership of Rev. Avedis Boynerian. Each day included a devotional, tours to different historic or cultural sites, visits to ECA churches and AMAA centers. Through these trips, I saw the passion that the people have for their country and their wonderful hospitality. I also saw the unwavering faith that the people had in God. Realizing this strengthened my own faith and also made me appreciate everything God has given me. Through this Program, I became more conscious of the importance of what the AMAA does in Armenia, and the enormous amount



Some of the Interns at Lake Sevan.



The Interns with some of the AMAA Staff at the Nicol Duman Center in Yerevan.

of support it gives to the ECA. During these 2 weeks, I realized that our relationships with each other were stronger and we became good friends united in Christ. I am very grateful to the AMAA for organizing these two weeks, where I made new friends, explored Armenia and strengthened my relationship with God. (Christine Maamarbashi)

I was fortunate to be part of the AMAA Internship this summer. Going to our Motherland with such an amazing group was an experience I won't ever forget. We learned an incredible amount about the AMAA and the importance of its presence in Armenia and around the world. One example is when we visited the Nicole Touman Center. They had a program where they shipped out free milk for children, who were able to survive because of the AMAA and its generosity. My biggest highlight was spending two nights at Camp Hankavan. The kids were so happy with the little things they had and it made me think of my life back in America and how I should be much more grateful for everything that I am fortunate enough to have. Last but not least, I want to thank Badveli Boynerian and our two leaders, Tamar Melkonian and Sevag Bakalian, for making this trip life changing and being part of this amazing experience! (Sarine Ashjian)

Arriving in Armenia was a moment of awe for all of us as we realized that we are stepping on the land where our forefathers fought to keep our faith as Armenians. The trip helped me gain knowledge of the work the AMAA and ECA do in Armenia. Some of the churches we visited include the Arm. Evang. Church of Tilijan, Armavir, Bangladesh and Yerevan. The Internship brought us together with the people we served as well as God, who is ultimately the most important relationship to hold with. (Remy Guirguis)

I feel so blessed to have been part of this summer's AMAA Internship. I was able to learn about everything the AMAA does to help people in Armenia, but also experienced the love, hospitality and generosity of the AMAA. We visited the Shogh Day Center and saw how the AMAA provides help for kids after school with their homework and have fun while using their talents. One of the highlights of the trip was the Toms Shoes. While at the office for the milk fund, we were able to see a delivery truck come in and drop off boxes of Toms Shoes. It was so cool to see the entire process of the shoe delivery. Camp Hankavan was easily the best part of the Internship. The



The Interns with the children at Camp Sheen Shoghig in Hankavan.

night we got to spend there was so meaningful. Although we were from different sides of the world we all had one thing in common, our love for the Lord. (Elizabeth Sarian)

This Internship helped me learn that the AMAA began in 1918, helping the Armenian widows and orphans in the Syrian deserts at the time of the Genocide. Today, they operate in 24 countries, helping people through operations like the milk fund, child sponsoring and summer camps. The Internship had many highlights, starting from the moment we got off the plane. Spending two weeks with people with similar values and beliefs was probably the top one for me and I learned new things from Badveli Boynerian's Bible studies each day. I want to express my gratitude to the AMAA for organizing and taking care of us throughout the entire trip. I also want to thank our amazing leaders Badveli Boynerian, Tamar Melkonian and Sevag Bakalian as well as all of the interns for making my first trip to Armenia so memorable and meaningful. (Nareen Babaian)

This summer, I had the opportunity to participate in the AMAA Internship to Armenia. Every intern was so friendly to one another that we were able to come together as one group, making new relationships and strengthening old ones. During our time in Armenia, we visited many monuments. I personally enjoyed Dzidzernagapert the most. From the moment we entered the monument, there was a silence that fell over us, leaving nothing but a soothing

Armenian melody in the background. It was truly breathtaking to actually visit this Armenian Genocide memorial and take in all that it stands for. It brought tears to our eyes and made us want to stay for as long as possible. My takeaway from Camp Hankavan was being able to witness the happiness that the kids got from singing worship songs and praising God, which makes me want to be more like them in my walk with God and appreciate everything that I take for granted in my life. (Antranig Boynerian)

God is good! This year He gave us the opportunity to be part of the AMAA Internship. During our time in Armenia, our group bonded with one another and most importantly, strengthened our love for Christ. The AMAA's hospitality and care went above and beyond for us. Being part of the Program opened my eyes in so many ways. For example, the amount of work AMAA does in Armenia is incredible. From its churches, camps and building schools, the AMAA strives to better the Armenian children and families. We also were introduced to the work of the ECA. Badveli Mgrdich Melkonian works with other pastors throughout Armenia and their churches to ensure they are secure in their faith and prepared to serve their church members. I am grateful for the blessings God gave me on this trip and for the memories I get to cherish. Thank you. AMAA! (Alexia Poladian)



AMAA Medical Mission Expands to Third Location This Year

By Dr. Al and Sue Phillips

What a blessing to be of service to the people of Armenia for the last eight years and we thank the Lord for all who have ventured along with us.

This year we had an enormous Medical Mission Team with 45 individuals from the US and Canada and nine Armenian translators. This was the largest team to date and although we were a bit apprehensive about the size and the ability to handle such a large group, we knew God had a plan. Little did we know that the fledging Evangelical Church congregation of Sisian had been praying that the medical team would come to their city. At the same time, three new physicians contacted us and said they were interested in joining the team after we had closed the application process. We couldn't say no as these additional physicians allowed us to go to another region in southern Armenia. We had wanted to do this in prior years, but found that we didn't have the manpower to split into two teams. Through God's divine intervention the Sisian church prayers helped our dream become a reality.

This year's team included nine physicians, two dentists, a chiropractor, a pharmacist, three nurses and a very willing group of ancillary workers eager to serve the Armenian people.

We began the week setting up a complete ambulatory clinic within the Evangelical Church in Vanadzor. The clinic provided a laboratory and diagnostic testing with an ultrasound and EKG. Other services included a reading glasses station and medical education by our nurses. Our dentists educated the youth on dental hygiene and treated them with fluoride. After a two-day stay in Vanadzor, we divided the team into two groups

with half going to Stepanavan and the other half to Sisian.

The overall success of our mission can be measured in many ways. First, we saw and treated over 1,400 patients in four days at the clinic. Second, over 400 children received fluoride dental treatments from our dentists. Third, we were able to bless patients with free medications, some that would last them for a year of treatment. Fourth, each physician team prayed with every patient who walked through the clinic offering more healing than just medication. Fifth, patients who had never been to church were able to attend church services that were held between the morning and afternoon clinic. And finally, we received word that because of our mission,



Volunteer dentists teach the children dental hygiene.



Using a donated ultrasound machine, Dr. Al Phillips (being assisted by P.A. student Donna Newman) checks the thyroid of a patient at the Vanadzor Clinic.

more families are now coming to church and are growing in their faith.

We are thankful to those who were praying for us and the Medical Mission Team. This year was especially difficult with many personal trials that Sue and I endured just prior to leaving. Yet God is faithful and gave us the strength that only can come from Him. We are thankful for the monetary support that the Armenian Missionary Association of America provided, allowing us to distribute free medication and supplies to hundreds of Armenians. We are humbled to see how God has grown the medical mission over the years. We can assure you that your generous donations to the AMAA earmarked for the medical mission go directly to the Armenian people and are only used for medications and supplies. Please consider joining us next year if you have the desire to serve God in Armenia. See our website link on amaa.org for more information. □



During his historic visit to the first Christian country, Armenia, from June 24-26, His Holiness Pope Francis met with many religious, political and public figures. On June 25, he visited Tzidzernagaberd, the Armenian Genocide Memorial Complex and Museum, reminding the world once again that the Armenian Genocide should never be forgotten or repeated. In the Memorial's Guest Book he wrote: "Here I pray with sorrow in my heart, so that a tragedy like this never again occurs, so that humanity will never forget and will know how to defeat evil with good. May God protect the memory of the Armenian people. Memory should never be watered-down or forgotten. Memory is the source of peace and the future."

Later that afternoon, His Holiness Pope Francis visited Gyumri and in the Vartanants Square of the city celebrated a Holy Mass and gave a powerful message to the thousands who had gathered to welcome him. "Faith is not a thing of the past, like an artifact in a museum. Rather, it is kept alive through continuous encounters with Christ," he said. "Once it is locked up in the archives of history, faith loses its power to transform, its living beauty, its positive openness to all."

Pope Francis along with His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians held an Ecumenical Ceremony and Prayer for Peace at Republic Square of Yerevan, later in the evening. Pope Francis concluded his message saying, "May God bless your future and grant that the people of Armenia and Turkey take up again the path of reconciliation, and may peace also spring forth in Nagorno-Karabakh..."

At the conclusion of his two day visit, Pope Francis participated in the Sunday morning Mass at Etchmiadzin, which was held outdoors on the grounds of the Cathedral, where thousands of people had gathered to listen to his final message before his return to Rome.

On the occasion of Pope Francis' visit, thousands of Armenians and guests from different countries and denominations were present in Armenia. The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), expresses gratitude to the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, for the invitation extended to its leadership to participate in the Papal visit reception and ceremonies. The Armenian Evangelical Community was represented by Rev. Haroutune Selimian, President of the Armenian Evangelical Community in Syria.

"Pope Francis is a champion of Truth and Justice. He is a man of Peace," said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO. "His words spoken on Armenia's soil will long resonate in the ears of mankind and inject Hope to the poor, the oppressed and the destitute." □



Pope Francis planting a tree at Dzidzernagapert in memory of the 1.5 million Armenians who perished during the Armenian Genocide.



Distinguished Clergy at Ecumenical Ceremony, Republic Square, Yerevan, Armenia.



Class of 2016 Bids Farewell to Haigazian University

By Mira Yardemian

On June 24, 2016, over 150 students, some of whom from war-torn Syria, proudly earned their undergraduate and graduate degrees at Haigazian University's 56th Commencement exercises, amidst an atmosphere of joyfulness and ovation, sometimes mixed with moments of high emotion, thus marking the end of another successful academic year.

MP Serge Toursarkissian represented the Speaker of the Parliament, H.E. Nabih Berry, and the President of the Council of Ministers, H.E. Tammam Salam was represented by the Minister of Information, Ramzi Jreige. Among the attendees were MPs Hagop Pakradouni and Jean Oghasabian, the Armenian Consul Ashot Vardanian, in addition to the heads of the Armenian political parties and representatives from several Lebanese political parties, representatives of the Commander of the Army and the Head of the Internal Security Forces. The audience also included community leaders, representatives of educational institutions, and members of the Board of Trustees, parents, relatives and friends.

A celebratory processional march by faculty and students, led by Chief Marshall Dr. Nadim Hassoun, followed by the Lebanese National Anthem and the prayer of invocation offered by Campus Minister, Rev. Wilbert Van Saane, opened the ceremony.

In his trilingual speech (Arabic, Armenian and English), University President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian addressed the Class of 2016, discerning on the virtue of "generosity." "A renewed discussion is revolving today around the balance of giving and

receiving... as the days progress, you will be required to give even more than you had done before," Dr. Haidostian stated. Tackling the issue from a religious approach, "it is in giving that we receive," Dr. Haidostian stated that even the corporate world has to exhibit virtue and be socially responsible. "While trying to receive and gain, the market has to serve and distribute what is socially good, otherwise it loses its legitimacy," he said. Dr. Haidostian focused on the very basic requirement of generosity, the one of giving things "freely," as according to him this act "freely open the horizons for life, for a better life. Generosity needs no justification and no explanation. It is a virtue you want to own, because in giving freely, in sharing freely, is transmitting freely all the good you have received, you will secure the wide horizons of growth and success," Dr. Haidostian concluded.

In his keynote address, Minister of Public Health, Wael Abou Faour focused on the key concepts the Lebanese nation often lacks such a sense of citizenship, national identity, cultural renaissance, intellectual pioneering and reform.

He considered that a nation will not experience its rebirth or renaissance without a cultural revolution, which in its turn is directly correlated to the prerequisite of freedom of thought and speech that could only be ensured through an adequate political system.

On finding solutions to those national problems, Abou Faour concluded his speech by putting this responsibility onto the graduates, inviting them to be the reform agents against corruption, unity

against division, knowledge against ignorance, good governance against lack of government, moderation and tolerance against all sorts of extremism and last but not least, hope and faith against despair.

With a sense of accomplishment, Valedictorian Christine Simidian looked at this commencement day as "the official recognition day of their dedication to higher education." She considered herself and her fellow graduates a diverse group of learners, with one thing in common, "all successful and aspiring to further success," whereas for her part, Valedictorian Sarah Farhat expressed her gratitude to the Haigazian University family, which she considered as a small example of Lebanon. She further acknowledged the major virtues they have acquired as graduates: knowledge, faith, confidence, and teamwork which she promised will be their future weapons in serving the country.

Finally, after singing the Alma Mater, and upon the Benediction offered by the President of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East Rev. Megrditch Karageozian, the graduates threw their caps high into the air, erupting in loud cheers.



A group of Haigazian University graduates in celebration.

AMAA generously supports Armenian students in higher education in Syria, Lebanon and Armenia in addition to North America. □

Haigazian University Board of Trustees Holds Annual Meeting in Beirut

Members of the Haigazian University Board of Trustees from the United States joined with their Lebanese counterparts at their Annual Meeting in Beirut on May 27 and 28.

The meetings focused on the strategic initiatives and future plans of the University, and constituted the perfect opportunity to study the reports from the President, Deans and various department heads, and listen to students' experiences. A fellowship dinner brought together the Haigazian University family and friends at the recently renovated Hotel Le Bristol in Hamra – Beirut. Among the attendees were Ambassadors Richard Jones, of the USA, and Samvel Mgrdchyan of Armenia.



On this special occasion, and in line with its core commitments and values, University President, Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian announced the launching of a new undergraduate major in Special Education. He reiterated the purpose of the B.A. in Education with Emphasis in Special Education, as being the "track that provides tomorrow's educators with a more comprehensive academic coverage in line with the global focus on acceptance of diversity and tolerance of differences."

In their special messages, both Ambassadors acknowledged Haigazian University's unique ties with their respective countries, and they valued its mission and role in fostering intercultural education which is ground based in openness, coexistence, tolerance and critical thinking. They further assured their continuous support to the University in the future.

Bezjian Building of Merdinian School Opens its Doors



The newly constructed Bezjian Family Building at the Merdinian School in Sherman Oaks, California opened its doors to students for the first time on August 18, 2016. This beautiful 6,840 sq. ft. modern building offers state-of-the-art facilities to the School students. It encompasses five classrooms, a library, science lab, art room and an office for the athletic coach. Children and teachers alike were very excited to see their new, tastefully decorated classrooms. Each classroom is in the process of being equipped with the latest in technology to enhance the students' learning experience.

On July 19, 2016, benefactors Mr. & Mrs. Albert and Terry Bezjian who were visiting from Michigan, toured the newly completed building and were impressed with its quality of construction, functionality and elegance.

The School is pleased to offer its supporters with the opportunity to name classrooms in honor of loved ones. For information, please contact Board members Dr. Ivan Shorhokian at (412) 759-2020, or Dr. Vahe Nalbandian at (818) 507-9848. □



L to R: School Principal Lina Arslanian, Benefactors Albert and Terry Bezjian, Board member and Building Committee Chair Koko Balian, Board President Dr. Vahe & Mrs. Seta Nalbandian.

C & E Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School Holds Year-End Graduations



On Sunday, June 12, the C & E Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School in Sherman Oaks, CA held its graduation ceremonies for elementary and middle school students. The large gathering of graduating students, their families, teachers, administrative staff and School Board members filled the Aram and Anahis D. Boolghoorjian Hall to capacity.

The festivities began with the American and Armenian anthems and Rev. Dr. Ara Chakerian, whose sons Aren and Daniel were among the proud graduates, offered the invocation. Students recited Psalm 121, followed by group recitations and songs, addresses by the valedictorians and the presentation of diplomas and achievement awards.



Speakers for the event included Dr. Vahe Nalbandian, Board Chairman, Lina Arslanian, Principal, and Rev. Dr. Ara Chakerian, Keynote Speaker. The celebrations ended with a Benediction by Rev. Chakerian.

On May 21, preschool students held their year-end program, and on Saturday, June 4, the kindergarten class held its own graduation ceremony. A class of 35 students graduated from kindergarten. Before receiving their diplomas, the students presented a program of songs and recitations, and acted in a play that took the attendees on an imaginary trip to the Motherland, Armenia. □

2016 Avedisian School Graduation *Extra Special!*



This year, graduation at the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian High School was extra special. The students decided to present, for the first time, "Avedisian" Awards and to recognize the benefactors and all the teachers of the School.

The "Most Patriotic Director" award was given to Principal Melanya Geghamyan and "Avedisian" prizes were awarded to the Armenian Missionary Association of Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian, Armenia Tree Project Executive Director Jeanmarie Papelian, School Benefactor Charles P. Bilezikian, President of the American University of Armenia Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian and others. The motto of the awards stems from the phrase: **Երազի՛ր, Աշխատի՛ր, Վայելի՛ր, Գնահատի՛ր** – "Yerazi'r, ashkhati'r, vayeli'r and gnahati'r" (Dream, Work, Enjoy, Appreciate).

The Avedisian School students have been taught to live by this principle. They have learned to dream about a good education, pride in their country and to dream for the future. In order to achieve these dreams, hard work and contributions to the changing world around them is required.

Through song, dance and skits, the students enthusiastically retold their memories of happy and carefree years spent at the School. The event ended with each graduating class promising all present that they will work hard to strengthen the Homeland and be active citizens in society.

The School's benefactor, Edward Avedisian, praised the children's knowledge and instruction and efforts by the teachers, all aimed at preserving the national spirit. He thanked and encouraged them to continue maintaining a high level of education for the advancement of the nation. Mr. Avedisian said that the Avedisian School students will have a bright and brilliant future.

In his speech, Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, President of the American University of Armenia, recalled how two years ago he attended the opening ceremony of the School, and was especially impressed by everyone's dedication and desire to succeed; from administrators and teachers to the student body. Dr. Der Kiureghian happily added that he was left with the same impression today. He offered some advice on learning by offering graduates a higher education if they wish to continue at the American University of Armenia.



Avedisian Elementary School Graduation

The Graduation Ceremony of the Elementary Section (4th graders) of the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School (housed in the Krikor and Beatrice Bilezikian Building) was held on June 16. The Elementary students, transformed to golden winged bees, delicate flowers, precursor birds and shining stars, presented a beautiful program of songs and recitations. They expressed gratitude to their teachers, who taught them to love and appreciate books and the Armenian language, promising them to study well and be good citizens of their Motherland.

We thank God for the opportunities created at the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School for the children of Armenia. The passionate spirit to create an appealing and attractive atmosphere in an educational institution where students love to excel and propel themselves forward has always been in the minds of the benefactors and the Armenian Missionary Association of America, who brought forth this unique educational institution. □

Commencements and Year-End Programs Celebrated at the Armenian Evangelical Schools in the Near East

The month of June was filled with year-end Programs and Graduation Ceremonies at the Armenian Evangelical Schools in the Middle East – Lebanon, Syria and Greece – that are supported by the AMAA. We thank God for enabling our Schools to have another successful academic year and wish them many more successes in the upcoming years. Congratulations to all our graduates!

Y. M. Philibosian Armenian Evangelical College

(Beirut, Lebanon) Commencement was held on the School campus the evening of July 1, the date of the 170th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Movement. Following the Lebanese and Armenian anthems, the opening scripture reading and prayer were offered by Chaplain Garine Cholakian. The guest speaker was Dr. Hrair Jebejian. Prizes were distributed, Elem VI students recited, the school Dzirani Choir sang and the Valedictorians spoke in Armenian and Arabic. School Principal Dr. Zaven Messerlian, after distributing the diplomas, addressed the graduates. The Raffy Manougian Achievement Award in extracurricular activities was given to Levon Babikian. The Ensemble de Chambre of AEC presented a musical performance under the guidance of Maestro Garo Avessian. Rev. Hrair Cholakian said the closing words and gave the Benediction. □



Armenian Evangelical College, Beirut, Lebanon



Central High School Students present an Armenian Dance.

The Graduation Ceremony of the **Armenian Evangelical Central High School** of Ashrafieh, Beirut, Lebanon was a vivid illustration of how Life gives unto Life: 22 6th graders and 20 12th graders received diplomas on June 29. Maral Deyirmenjian, Principal of the School, depicted Poet Gibran Khalil Gibran's verse that prioritizes giving of oneself, not of what one has. Since Our Lord, the Most Generous, has gifted us with life, it is only through generosity that the Central High School excels: generosity of the spirit, generosity of spreading knowledge, and generosity on the part of students to show deep gratitude for quality education and Christian ethics.

The Ceremony was embellished by music, dances, national songs and poetry that underlined the right to live and soar like eagles. Keynote Speaker Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian, President of the Armenian Missionary Association of Australia (AMA-Australia), placed the secret of success in having an aim and pursuing it perseveringly. He elaborated on how the Rozanski Fund was founded through AMA-Australia and that it aims at awarding full tuition to students who excel in their classes in the intermediate and secondary sections, starting Academic years 2016–2017. Hrayr Soghomonian, who made a tangible donation to Central High School during the current scholastic year, congratulated everyone, stressing diligence and appreciation for the teachers' efforts.

So truly Life gives unto Life: the Memorial Hall of the School was renovated by a special donation through AMA-Australia, a new endowment fund was established, and potentially good citizens prepared, all because God does justice and restitutes rights. □



Principal Maral Deyirmenjian presents awards to Benefactors Mr. & Mrs. Hrair Soghomonian and Keynote Speaker Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian.

Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian Secondary School's

graduation was held on May 14. Following the Lebanon and Armenia anthems, a program of songs and recitations was presented and dedicated to the heroes of Karabagh. The Valedictorians were Rita Vartabedian from the Arts Section, who in Arabic conveyed the gratitude of her classmates for their country Lebanon and from the Science Section Maral Samuelian, who on behalf of her classmates vowed to listen to the Motherland's Call and be a worthy child of her Armenian Nation. This year, 24 students graduated from the Secondary Section. After the presentation of the diplomas, Principal Vartoug Balekjian challenged the graduates to be responsible, disciplined and conscious Armenians and with their commitment to their Motherland, Nation, Church and family bring honor to the Armenian people.

The Program ended with Benediction by Rev. Raffi Messerlian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Nor Marash. The Kindergarten section of the Shamlian Tatigian Secondary School held its Year-end Program on June 10, and presented a program of songs, dances, recitations and a special drama dedicated to the Homeland Armenia and Karabagh. □



The graduating class of the Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian Secondary School.



The Kindergarten students of Torossian School.

Armenian Evangelical P. & E. Torossian School Graduation Celebrates School's 65th Anniversary

Kindergarten Graduation was held on June 9 for 13 students. During the program, the children worshiped God with lively songs and Bible verses in Armenian, Arabic and English. They also danced and presented sketches about their daily life.

The Elementary and Intermediate Graduation ceremonies were held on June 17 and the speaker was Anna Artin Ghantous, a graduate of the Near East School of Theology.

The School Choir performed three songs. The 10 graduates of Grades 6 and 19 graduates of Grade 9 presented group recitations. The theme of the Grade 9 recitation was Revival of Armenians and the theme of the Grade 6 recitation was the Teacher. Activities of the 2015-2016 Academic Year were presented with a power point presentation. □

Armenian Evangelical Bethel Secondary School's Grade 12 & 9 Graduation Ceremony

June 29 was the harvest day for students of Grades 12 and 9 from the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Secondary School of Aleppo, Syria. This year the School had 9 graduates from the Secondary school and 21 graduates from the Middle School. Following the Syrian and Armenian national anthems, Betty Yepremian, Principal of the School, gave the Opening Remarks followed by a prayer by Pastor Simon Der Sahagian.

The students then presented a beautiful program of songs, music, recitals of poems, dramas and dances, which were dedicated to Syria as well as to the 25th Anniversary of the Independence of Armenia. The Valedictorians of the Secondary Graduating Class were Armani Hera Selimian, Nour Mousa Oghli, Talar Hovhannesian and Rosalina Bakalian.

The program concluded with the presentation of diplomas and awards followed by Benediction by Rev. Haroutune Selimian, President of the Armenian Evangelical Community of Syria. □



Rev. Haroutune Selimian greets the Bethel School graduating class and guests.

The Year End Program and the Graduation Ceremony of the **Armenian Evangelical Martyrs' School** of Kessab was held on May 17. Before the program the students paid their tribute to the Martyrs of Syria. School Principal Ani Boymoushakian welcomed the guests and invited the students to present a beautiful program of patriotic songs. In his closing remarks, Rev. Jirair Ghazarian, Pastor of the Holy Trinity Armenian Evangelical Church, praised the Lord for a successful school year and thanked the School Board, the Principal, the staff as well as all the families for their dedication and hard work throughout the year.

After the program all the guests were invited for a cake cutting and a reception prepared by parents. □



The graduates of Armenian Evangelical Martyrs' School of Kessab.



The students of the Armenian Evangelical Kindergarten of Athens.

The theme of the 2016 Year End Program of the **Armenian Evangelical Kindergarten** of Athens, held on Saturday, June 4, was the 25th Anniversary of the Independence of Armenia and the 170th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church. The little children performed a beautiful and flawless program of recitations, songs and dances presenting all that they have learned during the year. The Kindergarten teachers Garine Jarbigian and Anna Afrigian worked tirelessly during the year to teach the children and prepare this program. The program was followed by a power point presentation prepared by Pastor Rev. Vicken Cholakian which depicted the life and activities of the Kindergarten during the 2015-2016 Academic year. This year's Kindergarten harvest was 5 children who received their diplomas and a Bible. Rev. Cholakian thanked the parents for raising and teaching their children to love God and to love their Homeland Armenia. Rev. Cholakian concluded the program with a Benediction. □

10th Anniversary of ARMISS Conservatory

On June 19 the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church of Aleppo, Syria hosted a memorable ceremony to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of ARMISS Conservatory. The event was held in the sanctuary of the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church and was attended by clergy, lay leaders, Central Committee members, Directors of the Armenian Evangelical Schools, Board of Trustees of the Armenian Evangelical Churches, representatives of the various Armenian organizations and students with their families.

Shoghag Selimian, Director of ARMISS Conservatory, warmly welcomed the guests and gave a brief introduction about the School and its activities. Sevan Chirishian played a video describing the history and activities of the Conservatory. The students displayed their talents and musical abilities by performing on piano, guitar, violin and flute. During the recital, Mrs. Selimian also performed two musical pieces on piano, accompanied by Zani Pambukian (flute) and Sarkis Avakian (violin).

At the end of the program Rev. Haroutune Selimian, Pastor of the Church, congratulated the Director and the staff of the Conservatory for their hard work, honored them with gifts and concluded with a Benediction. The guests then enjoyed a reception held at the Church hall where the 10th Anniversary cake was cut. All the



guests were revitalized by the music presented by the Conservatory students.

"Music and song are embedded in our culture and expression of faith," said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO. "Despite the rockets and mortars, and with your support, the AMAA sustains a spirit of peace and praise within our community in Aleppo." □

AMAA Awards Scholarships to Needy and Deserving Students

This year, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) awarded \$181,000.00 in direct scholarship grants to college students for the 2016-17 academic year, to 59 worthy students who attend colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. The AMAA Scholarship Committee is attentively and tirelessly chaired by Robert Hekemian, Jr.

In addition, \$15,000 was assigned for qualified university students in Armenia.

For over 45 years, the AMAA has helped thousands of college students with scholarships, thus helping them prepare for the future and relieving the financial burden that makes it harder to focus on their work. Moreover, since its inception, the AMAA has helped thousands of students from kindergarten to high school with tuition aid. The AMAA also provides financial aid to schools and institutions of higher education in the Near East, including Haigazian University and the Near East School of Theology in Beirut.



The scholarships granted this year were provided from several AMAA scholarship funds established over the years to help students in need. Students may request applications from AMAA headquarters in Paramus, NJ beginning in January of each year. The deadline to submit applications for the 2017-2018 academic year is May 1, 2017. □

Invisible Influences, Concrete Shapers

By Sabrina Sirabonian*

All my life I have been influenced by my family, pastors, teachers and friends. Their influence continues to affect all areas of my life whether I am near them or not. They are apparent in every area of my studies, in my choices for media, and in the connections I make in my social environment. However, there are people in my life who continue to influence me even though I have never met them and never will meet them. One of the main invisible influences came from my great-grandparents. Their strength, dedication to their families, and love motivates me to be a better person and to trust God in all circumstances.



My great-grandparents escaped from the Genocide one hundred and one years ago and made a tremendous effort to provide for their families in Argentina and Brazil. They arrived in those countries with very little besides the clothes on their backs, their surviving children, what was left of their dignity, and their faith. Every single cent they earned working as seamstresses, shoemakers and mechanics was used to build Armenian churches in their communities and Armenian schools for their children's education. My grandparents always told me how challenging those first years were and how God was faithful providing them with "manna" each day.

Today, I feel so blessed being in the United States studying medicine at Liberty University, the largest Christian university in the world. I know all the efforts and struggles my great-grandparents and grandparents endured to provide for their families is reflected on my upbringing, and also in all of my family's blessings.

The Armenian culture of saving money and prioritizing faith, education and anticipating long term benefits for the family, taught me considerably, especially now that I am far away from my family and familiar culture. Their invisible influences are shaping my decisions in my education, relationships and future choices. The motivation that they had one hundred years ago of never giving up and trusting God with all their heart gives me strength and faith to keep looking forward in my own desire of becoming a missionary doctor.

As an Armenian, I feel that it is my duty to honor the sacrifices made by my ancestors by being a dedicated and respectful student in every aspect of my life. In school and the medical field, I am sure I will have difficult ethical dilemmas and I want to honor God and my family by making truthful decisions. Furthermore, remembering the efforts made by my family gives me strength and desire to continue protesting for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide whether I am in Brazil or in the United States.

My precious great-grandparents' faith of loving and following God above all things inspires me to go into the medical field in areas with refugees, as they once were, and treat those who are in so desperate need of physical and spiritual assistance. By taking care of the less fortunate, I believe I will be doing for them what missionaries did for my own family. Therefore, even though I never met my great-grandparents, they are the major motivating influences that continue to shape my life. Their faith, love and strength are a constant guiding presence directing me to God every moment and their story and effort remind me of who I am every day.

**Sabrina Sirabonian of Sao Paulo, Brazil is an AMAA Scholarship Recipient who currently studies in the United States.*

Planning the Future of Camp ARMEN

Early July, Rev. Kirkor Ağabaloğlu, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa, Istanbul was in Armenia, along with a delegation comprised of members of the Committee for the Construction and Rehabilitation of Istanbul's CAMP ARMEN (Kamp Armen), including engineer Nazareth Binatli, architects Aleen Pontiglu, Zhan Gavrilov, representative of the Hrant Dink Foundation Delal Dink (Hrant Dink's daughter) and benefactors Harout and Talar Khorozoglus.

They came to Yerevan to get acquainted with creative centers for children and youth, and learn some positive things that they can implement at CAMPARMEN, where children and youth will come during their summer vacations and develop their creative thinking and artistic abilities.

The guests met with RA's Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan. The Minister welcomed the guests warmly and expressed her gratitude to all the Armenians of Istanbul, for staying true to their national identity and setting an example of how to live as an Armenian. During the meeting, the Minister also touched upon the school for children from Armenia, based under the roof of the Armenian Evangelical Church in the Gedik Paşa. She expressed her gratitude to Rev. Ağabaloğlu for his attention and heartfelt attitude for this school, as well as to the school's sponsors, Harout and Talar Khorozoglus for their financial assistance.

They later visited "TUMO Center for Creative Technologies," and got acquainted with creative and skilled education of the students and the control system of the center led by the qualified educators and technical experts. The guests also visited the AMAA's Nor Nork District's SHOGH Day Care Center and got acquainted with the

activities of the children who come from families with social issues and problems. They also talked with the Center's teachers, social worker and psychologist. The guests familiarized them with all the activities that are carried in Istanbul among Armenian children.

Rev. Kirkor Ağabaloğlu spoke about all the difficulties that they went through last year for the return of CAMPARMEN to its right owner, the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa.

"The AMAA commends and whole heartedly supports the community efforts in Istanbul exerted to reconstruct CAMP ARMEN," said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO. "It is our sincere wish to see the mission of the audacious hero, Hrant Guzelian, and the legacy of Hrant Dink, reignite at CAMPARMEN with new generations of Armenian Youth walking the path of the faith and may the 'homecoming' of the remnants vigorously resume." □



Rev. Kirkor Ağabaloğlu, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa, Istanbul and a delegation comprised of members of the Committee for the Construction and Rehabilitation of Istanbul's Camp Armen meet with RA Minister of Diaspora, Hranush Hakobyan



KCHAG Lebanon: Enjoying The Beautiful Campsite in the Summer of 2016

KCHAG is a haven within minutes of Beirut where people can escape from the rush of daily life and rest in a calming nature and a Christian atmosphere.

"KCHAG" is an acronym which, in Armenian, stands for **K**risdonyagan **C**hanitz **A**marayin **G**etron (Christian Endeavor Summer Center). This name represents a camp experience, run by the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, which has left an indelible mark over the years on the lives of many Armenians.

We thank God that during this past year, KCHAG hosted more than thirty groups for worship services, private prayer sessions, seminars, conferences, church outings and trainings, including some from the Armenian Apostolic Church. This summer, KCHAG hosted both young and older people who participated in the UAECNE Annual meeting. But more importantly, participants in the children's, juniors', young adults' and women's camps came from various Armenian Evangelical Churches in Lebanon, and some from Syria

as well. The total number of participants in the specifically Armenian Evangelical camps exceeded 300 individuals, in addition to hundreds of other youth, leaders and church members who used and continue to use the campsite as their venue for summer activities during a prolonged season that extends until schools start at the end of September.

The participants in the Armenian Evangelical camps are usually subsidized so we are in constant need to fundraise so that no child or youth is left out of this God-pleasing summer activity. The AMAA continues to be a major source of support for our projects. It is worth noting that more than half of the camp participants are not able to cover their basic expenses, and qualify for all the support we can give.

The larger and long-term needs are for a fence around the camp, a new seminar room, and the renovation of the entrance building. We face many challenges to make KCHAG a better-equipped camp through improvements and yearly renovations.

KCHAG is still run with the help of many volunteers, and a few part-time employees and committee members. The support of our worldwide community and friends has been a major encouragement both to rebuild KCHAG and to develop our ministry there.



Assistance is needed to continue making KCHAG a better equipped, safe, attractive and comfortable camp site. We thank God for a beautiful and peaceful haven where people have been learning more about God, committing their lives to Christ, learning to work in teams, and experiencing the warmth of Christian fellowship in the midst of wars and tribulations. This has been the case since 1948. It is true today, and we pray that it may continue for many more generations. We should also remind ourselves that the blessings of those participating in our camps and activities at KCHAG are multiplied as the participants share their stories, lessons learned and testimonies with their friends and families.

Please continue to support this wonderful ministry of KCHAG. We are grateful that this summer a new car has been purchased to facilitate tasks, new outdoor benches have been added and the Chapel has been air-conditioned! ☐



Making Summer Memories at AMAA Camps in Armenia and Karabagh That Last a Lifetime

Since 1990, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), with the cooperation of the Evangelical Church of Armenia (ECA), has organized two over-night camps, Sheen Shoghik Camp in Hankavan, Armenia and Camp Bedrosian in Shoushi, Karabagh, as well as several day camps in other areas in the Homeland.

Every summer these camps provide thousands of children in Armenia and Karabagh the opportunity to leave the boredom of a summer spent in the city and be immersed in a reinvigorating experience surrounded by positive role models. It also allows the campers to escape their impoverished daily routines and be exposed to a program which fosters positive self-esteem, builds self-confidence, and most importantly lets them hear the Word of God.

As the campers come from impoverished families, the AMAA does not charge them any fees.

This summer, some 650 children, 500 teenagers and 180 youth participated in camp activities at Camp Sheen Shoghik, and around 360 children, 210 teenagers and 80 youth participated in camp activities at Camp Bedrosian.

Thanks to the generosity of many donors and friends of the AMAA, children, teens and young adults were able to attend AMAA/ECA summer camp programs where they shared the love of Jesus in very practical ways to play, learn, enhance their talents, socialize, meet new friends, learn Armenian national culture and be nourished in a Christian atmosphere of tender loving care.

All of this is accomplished by the support of all members of our community. □



Camp AREVELK Marks 17th Year of its Ministry

By Rev. Dr. Ara Jizmejian

2016 marked the 17th year of the wonderful ministry of the Armenian Evangelical Union and another successful year for Camp Arevelk in New York. Camp Arevelk, as always, is filled with great excitement and noise, as well as fellowship and worship. This ministry has been under the supervision of Camp Director Sylvia Jizmejian since 2000. Camp Arevelk is made possible by the work of the Camp Arevelk Committee, the counselors and the staff who give of their time for this important ministry. Over the years, Camp Arevelk has been essential in developing young leaders in the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship and ultimately the churches of the AEUNA.

This year's theme was Unselfish: Live to Serve, which will also be the AEYF theme for the 2016-2017 school year. The speaker for the week was Pastor Astor Yaluenguezian. Other than time with the speaker, the campers had quiet time every

morning, as well as a Bible lesson and cabin times with their counselors.

Each day, the young people had a session of arts and crafts led by Monique Pappas. Arpi Sarian, Camp nurse, handled the aches and pains of the campers (with the help of Michael Pappas). This year, in addition to directing the Camp, Sylvia was also the Activities Coordinator. Rev. Shant Barsoumian and Rev. Dr. Ara Jizmejian served as the Bible teachers and Rev. Dr. Ara Heghinian and Sylvia Jizmejian also taught Bible lessons for part of the week.

We thank the Camp Committee for its work during the year, especially the

chair, Silva Orchanian. We would also like to thank the speakers and Bible teachers who taught our young people about the Scriptures and how to apply their faith. We also thank the counselors and staff for running the Camp, for without them, there would be no Camp. We also thank the AMAA and the AEUNA for their financial support of Camp Arevelk.

A special thank you goes to the parents who spent time praying for the Camp every morning. This year, as in every year, it was truly a blessing to all who attended Camp Arevelk. May our Lord be glorified through this essential ministry of the AEUNA. □



The Armenian Evangelical Church of Belgium Holds Family Camps

From June 17 to 19, the Armenian Evangelical Church of Belgium held Family Camps for Turkish speaking Armenians.

About 120 participants came to the Camp from Germany, Holland, France and Belgium. Orhan Pıçaklar, a Turkish pastor

from the city of Samsun, was the speaker. The campers were blessed by his messages and by the fellowship.

The Church also held another Family Camp June 23-26 for families from Armenia. Over 130 participants heard messages

from Gago Virabyan, Yura Alexanian and Rev. Sarkis Pachayan. At the end of the Camp session, five adults and four children dedicated their lives to God.

The AMAA continues its support to the ministry of Belgium Church. □



Camp AREV Continues to Grow

By Rev. Razmig Minasian, Camp Arev Executive Director

It was a Wednesday evening at the end of another amazing day at Camp AREV in California. The speaker had just given a call to follow Christ, as she called them to turn from their sins and trust in Jesus for their salvation. We all knew God was powerfully moving in the hearts and the minds of all the campers. After we prayed, we dismissed everyone for their cabin time. A time where the cabins would gather to discuss what it means to follow Christ. At the end of the day, as the counselors gathered for a time of sharing and prayer, one of the counselors, shared the miraculous news. One of her campers had trusted in the Lord Jesus that evening. We rejoiced! We could not help but praise God, namely because, prior to Wednesday, this particular camper was adamant about going home. As we convinced her to stay because we didn't want her to miss out on camp, God did a miracle in her life that very evening.

It is clear that God continues to change lives at Camp AREV. It's not just one story, it's one story after another of how God is transforming the lives of young people, and bringing them closer to himself. We praise God for another amazing summer season. Our mission and vision was to tell our youth that Christ loves them in a deep and profound way and that he wants a personal relationship with them. And our goal was to preach the Gospel and help campers walk in step with Christ. We rejoice for the opportunity of directing lives towards Jesus Christ.

This year was amazing. We introduced a few new activities. A 7 element low ropes course that was helpful in team building, communication and trust. We also introduced the "Human Carwash" where campers would run through it for our afternoon team games. As usual our zip line and archery range was very popular and finally our college and career campers enjoy our brand new six on six human football course. Overall, we had another fun filled and exciting summer season at Camp AREV. Therefore, we can't help but thank God everything and specifically for all our parents, our counselors, our team of Coordinators, our volunteer staff and our paid employees. I also thank God for the leadership of our committee as we as the AEUNA board of directors. Their support and fervent prayers are much needed during the summer months.

We praise God that this year we successfully concluded several major projects, namely, the resurfacing of our basketball court, installing a brand new roof on our Lodge, and remodeling our Facility Manager's cottage. Without the support of our community, we would be unable to accomplish these tasks as quickly as we did.

Camp AREV continues to grow and growth comes through seeking God in prayer.



We believe that we serve a faithful God and through prayer he has opened up the doors for us to be able to dream big dreams. We pray that Camp AREV becomes a top notch retreat and conference center. We have big dreams and we can't wait to see what God has in store. I want to thank the AMAA for their ongoing prayer and financial support. I also thank many individuals who support the vision and the mission of this thriving and vital ministry. □



SYRIA LIFELINE SAVES LIVES

What do Ani, Serop, Mary and Hagop have in common? They are some of the latest Syrian-Armenians who the Armenian Missionary Association of America has moved from Aleppo to the safety of their Homeland, Armenia.

They have all lived in danger, lost homes and jobs, and feared for their own safety and that of their children. Each and every day, they lived without hope and peace.

Today, many more of our sisters and brothers are in desperate need. Recent reports from Aleppo have confirmed that rebels continue to fire missiles and artillery into many Christian neighborhoods, causing large-scale destruction and death.

The AMAA has established a Syria Lifeline to help families, like those of Ani, Serop, Mary and Hagop, who are forced to leave their homes and resettle in Armenia. They have little or no money. Financial assistance is desperately needed to ensure they reach a safe place to stay in the Homeland where they will find food, water, clothing, education and medical assistance. We must not forget them.

We pray that you will come to their aid and continue living the joy of giving. Your caring gift, no matter how large or small, will help provide much needed relief to these families who have undergone so much suffering and unrest. They are also in need of your daily prayers.

May God continue to bless you for your generous support and may God embrace and provide strength to our brothers and sisters in Armenia.

Sincerely,

Zaven Khanjian
Executive Director/CEO



Aleppo, Syria



Yerevan, Armenia

170th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church

UAECNE Celebrates 170th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church

The 170th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church was celebrated at the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Beirut on Sunday, July 10, in the presence of the leadership of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE), the Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Lebanon Bishop Shahe Panossian, a representative of the Armenian Catholic Church Father Sebouh Garabedian, the Ambassador of Armenia to Lebanon Samvel Mgrdchyan, Protestant Member of Parliament Dr. Basem Shabb, representatives of the Arab Protestant Churches in Lebanon and Syria, representatives of a number of Armenian organizations and political parties, and worshippers from various churches in Beirut. Also present were delegates from other countries who had arrived in Beirut to attend the 70th Annual Meeting of the UAECNE.

The sermon at this celebratory worship service, based on Hebrews 10:23 ("Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful") was delivered by the UAECNE President, Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian. Other participants in the leadership of the service included Revs. Hrayr Cholakian, Raffi Messerlian, Haroutune Selimian, Vicken Cholakian, and Paul Haidostian. An adult and a children's choir sang several hymns and the service was followed by a reception in the church yard. □



The Armenian Evangelical Church of Moscow Celebrates 170th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church

On Saturday, July 16, a special conference was held at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Moscow celebrating the 170th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church. Members of the Church and guests from the community were present at this special event. The program started with a prayer offered by Rev. Masis Akopian, Pastor of the Church.

Keynote Speaker was Rev. Dr. René Leonian, President of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Eurasia. Rev. Dr. Leonian presented two themes – "The History of the Foundation of the Armenian Evangelical Church" and "The Current History of the Armenian Evangelical Church."

Among the guests were Rev. Sassoun Karakhanian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Sochi and Rev. Armen Mnatsaganian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Galuka. They participated in the program and spoke about the Church being the temple of the living God and the Holiness of the Church.

The Choir from the Armenian Evangelical Church of Moscow presented spiritual songs, and Soloist of Christian songs Murad Zakaryan also presented some spiritual songs.



At the end of the program Rev. Dr. Leonian answered questions from the audience. During the day all the participants felt the presence of the living God and our Lord Jesus Christ and got acquainted with each other.

The Conference concluded with Rev. Dr. Leonian's Benediction. □

Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of Eurasia

Pastoral Retreat in Sochi, Russia

The Armenian Evangelical Union of Eurasia organized a Pastoral Retreat in Sochi for its Armenian ministers from June 13-17. The participants came from Russia, Abkhazia and Georgia and consisted of eight ordained ministers and four ministers' assistants: Valery Zakarian, Karen Khatchadourian, Masis Akopian, Sasun Karakhanian, Edik Khachatrian, Valodia Sahakian, Nerses Hovhanisian, Armen Ghukasian, Mihran Torosian, Virab Hakopian, Ivan Chekhunov, and René Léonian.

Each minister was able to bring a biblical message followed by an ample time for prayers. Some of the topics were: God's will, to follow Jesus, the importance of the prayer, Jesus changes our lives, without vision the people die, and the loyalty of God.

Every local church presented the day to day life of its church as well as future projects. Rev. Dr. René Léonian, President of the Union of Eurasia, made a historical summary of the creation of the Union in 1995 until today and reminded participants about the goals of this Union. A special guest, Rev. Ivan Chekhunov, President of the Russian Evangelical Church of Sochi and its region, preached on the theme of our vocation as a minister. He addressed our dedication to God and the importance of His Word.

The participants in this Pastoral Retreat also spent a lot of time sharing their vision about the local church and the Armenian Evangelical Union of Eurasia. This vision is summarized essentially in two points: Preach the Gospel of the salvation in Jesus Christ mainly with the Armenians settled in the countries of the former Soviet Union and in the countries of Eastern Europe (formerly communists) and help in the conservation of the Armenian identity (language, history and culture). To realize this vision, three aspects are important: human resources, a good strategy and financial resources.

Several other subjects were discussed: the problem of Armenian families who emigrate from Eurasia to France or to other European countries, theological training of the young people and the future servants of God, and the importance of communication.

During the week, participants were able to visit families and some of the activities of the Church of Sochi.

We thank the Church of Sochi for welcoming this Pastoral Retreat and the AMAA for financing this conference. And finally we thank God for allowing the ministers to meet in



Some of the ministers who participated in the Retreat.



Former students of Evangelical Theological Academy of Armenia.

L to R: Edik Khachatryan, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Sochi; Karen Khatchadourian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Tbilisi; and Armen Ghukasian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Fellowship of Armavir/Krasnodar (Russia).

a spirit of prayer and to listen to the Lord's voice. All the participants returned to their cities and their countries renewed in their faith and ready to continue serving the Armenian people and their social and spiritual needs.

The AMAA continues to support the ministry of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Eurasia. □



AEUNA Holds 23rd Biennial General Assembly in Chicago

By Rev. Jeremy Tovmassian

The Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago hosted the 2016 General Assembly of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) June 23-26, 2016 in Skokie, IL. The theme for the weekend — *Reclaiming the Zeal of our Founders* — explored the unique history and heritage of our Armenian Evangelical community. The Keynote Speaker for the weekend was Rev. Jackson Crum of the Park Community Church in Chicago, IL. Rev. Crum's moving message challenged us all to cultivate our rich Armenian Evangelical tradition and innovate its expression for the 21st Century. Rev. Hrag Karagoezian led the daily worship sessions with a unique blend of contemporary worship songs and hymns both in the English and Armenian languages.

The General Assembly officially elected Rev. Berdj Djambazian to the position of Minister to the AEUNA. Rev. Dr. Ara Jizmejian was elected as the Director of AEUNA Ministries Eastern Region. The new Board of Directors, led by our newly elected Moderator, Rev. Dr. Ara Chakerian, was voted into office. Also, a revised and restated version of the AEUNA Bylaws was put to a vote and accepted by the General Assembly.

Clearly, there were many occasions for celebration. One such occasion of notable mention was the welcoming of two



The Armenian Evangelical Pastors participate in the AEUNA's 23rd Biennial General Assembly.

new sister churches into AEUNA fellowship: The Armenian Evangelical Holy Trinity Congregational Church of Buenos

Aires, Argentina and the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montevideo, Uruguay. Rev. Ara Mkhitryan and his wife Mariam from the Buenos Aires church travelled a long distance to celebrate this new partnership with the AEUNA. We welcome both churches with hearts open wide and look forward to many more years of fellowship in the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Our next General Assembly will take place in the summer of 2018. Stay posted for the announcement of our 2018 host city. We hope to see you all there!

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" Psalm 133:1 ☐



UAECNE Holds 70th Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) that opened with the 170th Anniversary celebratory worship service in Beirut, continued for three consecutive days in KCHAG, Lebanon from July 11 to 13, 2016. Delegates attended from various Armenian Evangelical churches of Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Greece and Australia, and guests from Denmark attended the whole program.

The first day of meetings lasted till 10:30pm and was fully dedicated to the Union business, including the annual reports, elections and deliberations. The topics that received much attention were the difficulties facing the whole field in the Middle East, especially in Syria, the financial crises of the educational field, the need for additional human resources and leadership, and the urgency of staying in communion and fellowship with our partners abroad.

The second and third days were held in the form of seminars on such topics as: the history and positions of the first 40 founders

of the Armenian Evangelical Church; the Statement of Faith of the Armenian Evangelical Churches; the response of the Church in times of crisis; and our vision for the future. The program included times of prayer, worship and fellowship.

The Annual Meeting was concluded with a communion service led by Pastor Vazrig Safarian. Rev. Raffi Messerlian delivered the sermon, and Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian administered the Communion.

As part of the program, the delegates were invited by the UAECNE to attend a film screening organized by Haigazian University. The film, *Map of Salvation* (MAN Pictures-Armenia), tells the stories of five missionary women from Europe (Maria Jacobsen, Karen Jeppe, Bodil Bjorn, Alma Johansson and Anna Hedvig Büll) who witnessed the Armenian Genocide and who dedicated their lives to the care and salvation of Armenian children for many years. ☐

Levon Filian, AMAA West Coast Executive Director Visits Anjar, Lebanon



During his visit to Lebanon, Levon Filian, AMAA West Coast Executive Director, visited Anjar and met with the leadership of the Armenian Evangelical Church and the Armenian Evangelical High School to convey greetings from the AMAA. He also was the guest preacher at the Church on Sunday, May 29. □

AMAA Sunday at Pilgrim Church in Fresno



The Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church in Fresno, CA had a mission Sunday on June 5. Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, AMAA's Field Director and Pastor to Pastors in Armenia, preached during the worship service after greeting the congregation on behalf of the AMAA.

The congregation had a light luncheon and heard about the mission of the AMAA in general and about their sister church in Gyumri, Armenia.

The Pilgrim Church has been faithfully helping the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Gyumri for years. Rev. Melkonian introduced the Gyumri church life with a power point presentation and challenged the congregation to pray for the church and to help them financially. More than one hundred church members attended the luncheon with many asking questions about the mission of the AMAA and about the Gyumri church. □

Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church of Glendale, CA Holds AMAA Sunday



On Sunday, June 12, the Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church of Glendale, CA held its AMAA Sunday during its morning worship service. Levon Filian, AMAA West Coast Executive Director, delivered the message reminding the congregation that they are created to "bear fruit." With a video presentation, he also gave a missions report about the different ministries of the AMAA around the world. During the fellowship hour, he met with the Church Council and the Missions Committee of the Church. The Church assured that they will continue to pray for and support the important and ongoing work of the AMAA. □

AMAA Sunday at Christ Armenian Church in La Crescenta, CA



L to R: Serjik Ghahramanian (former Church Board member, part of ministry team, volunteer), Garo Souhajian (guest worship leader) Michael Piranian (former Church Moderator), Levon Filian, Pastor Saro Khachikian and Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian.

On Sunday, July 24, The Christ Armenian Church in La Crescenta held their AMAA Sunday during their regular worship services. Pastor Saro Khachikian and Pastor Hendrik Shanazarian welcomed Levon Filian, West Coast Executive Director of the AMAA, to bring the message and share with them about the ministry and mission work of the AMAA worldwide. Parishioners met with Mr. Filian during the fellowship hour to learn more about the different ministries of the AMAA. □

Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան Գործադիր Տնօրէն Զաւէն Խանճեանի Խօսքը յղուած Հայաստան Համահայկական Հիմնադրամի Հոգաբարձուներու Խորհուրդի 25րդ Հերթական Նիստին

Մեծարգոյ Նախագահ,
Վեհափառ Հայրեր,
Մեծարգոյ անդամներ ՀՀՀի Հոգաբարձական կազմի,
Յարգելի գործակիցներ,

Աշխարհացիւ Հայ Աւետարանական համայնքի զաւակներու անունով ջերմօրէն կ'ողջունեմ ձեզ այս առաւօտ, «ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆ» Համահայկական Հիմնադրամի հոգաբարձուներու խորհուրդի 25րդ հերթական նիստի առիթով:

Բժախնդրութեամբ ծրագրած էի ձեր մէջ եւ հետ գտնուիլ այսօր: Նիստի ժամանակացոյցի փոփոխութիւնը սակայն, ափսոս կարելի չդարձուց զայն: Այս դահլիճը եւ այն առաքելութիւնը որ այստեղ հաւաքած է մեզ այսօր, հարազատ է ինձի: Առաքելութիւնը պարտի հարազատ ըլլալ ամէն մի հայու իսկ դահլիճը, գումարած կարգ մը ներկաներ՝ ինձ կը յուշեն այն տարիները զոր գերագոյն հրճուանքով եւ գոհունակութեամբ հանդիսացան ՀՀՀի ճամբով իմ ժողովուրդի եւ հայրենիքի ծառայութեան դաշտին մէջ գտնուած տարիներս:

ՀՀՀը երբեք հեռու չէ մնացած իմ կեանքէս, ինչպէս նաեւ Հայ Աւետարանական Եղեղեցւոյ եւ Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան կեանքէն: Սրտագին շնորհաւորութիւններ 25ամեակի առիթով, յարգանք եւ պատիւ հիմնադիրներուն: Մենք ծանօթ ենք այն պատուաբեր եւ օրհանբեր ճանապարհին զոր եղած է ՀՀՀի ուղին եւ այն բազում եւ զմայելի բարիքները զոր ՀՀՀը դրոշմած է հայրենի հողին եւ անոր ժողովուրդի ֆիզիքական եւ ոգեղէն կեանքին վրայ:

Ապագայի սեւեռումով կը փափաքիմ Հոգաբարձական Խորհուրդի եւ ՀՀՀի Ղեկավարութեան հետ կիսել մի քանի խորհուրդներ:

Ա- Ժամանակի պայմանները մեզ կը յուշեն անհրաժեշտութիւնը վերանայելու մեր որդեգրած ճանապարհին եւ հարկ եղած ուղղութիւնները կատարելու: Տարիներու ընթացքին անհատ բարերարներ եւ կամ բարենպատակ կազմակերպութիւններ իսկայական ծրագիրներ մշակեցին, ծրագրեցին, որդեգրեցին եւ գործադրեցին Հիմնադրամի ծիրէն դուրս: Այդ ընթացքը պիտի շարունակուի: Հիմնադրամի դրամահաւաքի քարոզչութեան ճանապարհին, ժամանակն է վերադառնալ շեշտելու «Ազգային Տուրք»ի գաղափարախօսութիւնը, բազմացնելու նուիրատուներու թիւը եւ հզօրացնելու Հիմնադրամի ժողովրդային պատուանդանը:

Բ- Հարկ է այս դահլիճին մէջ այսօր հաւաքաբար անդրադառնալ թէ ՀՀՀը նաեւ, հայ ժողովուրդի զանազան խաւերու մէջ վստահութեան պակասի հարց ունի: Ուրանալ այս, ինքնախաբէութիւն է: Հարկ է ուշադրութիւն դարձնել այս երեւոյթին եւ լրջախոհ քայլերով ապահովել ժողովրդային վստահութիւնը: Այս առիթով իմ խայտանքս կ'ուզեմ յայտնել Արեւմտեան Մեծ Հիմնադրամի նոր Ատենապետուհի, Մարիա Մեհրապեանի նշանակման, շնորհաւորել զայն եւ վստահութեամբ հաստատել թէ այս նշանակումը վերջապէս յոյս կը ներշնչէ:

Գ- Հինգ տարիէ իվեր հայ ժողովուրդը կ'ապրի եւ կը դիմագրաւէ Սփիւռքահայութեան արմատները խախտող եւ գոյութեան սպառնացող յետ Եղեռմեան ամենամեծ Ազգային Աղէտը:

Սուրիահայութեան տագնապին, Սփիւռքահայ Մայր Գաղութի անդամահատումին եւ Սուրիահայ հոծ գաղթականներու անյոյս եւ անմխիթար վիճակին՝ մենք հաւաքաբար հարկ եղած լրջութեամբ չմօտեցանք:



Այո՝ գոյութիւնը քաջքշող սնունդ մը կարողացանք հայթայթել կրակի տակ գտնուողներուն: Գորովագին օժանդակութեամբ թերեւցուցինք Հայրենիք հասնող անկողմացոյց գաղթականներու ցաւը: Սակայն չկրցանք մեծ պատկերը տեսնել եւ գաղութի քայքայումէն փխած նուազագոյն օգուտը քաղել, որովհետեւ՝ Սուրիահայութեան տագնապէն փխած բոլոր չարիքներու դիմաց միայն մէկ միսթարութիւն եւ ազգային շահ կրնայ ըլլալ՝ անոնց հայրենիք հաստատուիլը եւ հայրենիքը մարդուծով, տաղանդով եւ կարողականութեամբ հարստացնելը:

Սուրիան եւ Սուրիահայութիւնը, փրկութեան կարօտ ոգեղէն Արեւմտահայաստանն է:

Ահաւասիկ ՀՀՀի մարտահրաւերը:

Դեր եւս ուշ չէ:

Դ- իսկ վերջապէս Արցախը՝ մեր հաւաքական ցաւին եւ կորուստի մորմոքին բալասան՝ կենդանի եւ շօշափելի Արեւմտահայաստանն է: Մեր Աւարայրն ու Սարդարապատն է, Հայաստանի գոյութեան, հզօրութեան եւ գերիշխանութեան գրաւականը, անսասան թումբը եւ անխախտելի կարմիր գիծը: Հիմնադրամը արդարօրէն ուշադրութեան առարկայ դարձուցած է Արցախը եւ պարտի շարունակել այդ «աչքի լոյս» հոգածութիւնը: Հարկ է սրբութեամբ մօտենալ այդ ճանապարհին վրայ մերը եղող բոլոր կարելիութիւններուն եւ միջոցառումներուն, ճանապարհի մը գոր ուրօգուած է նահատակ ազատամարտիկներու արիւնով: Արցախը առաջնահերթ նպատակ է ՀՀՀի ծրագիրներու ցանկին:

Հայ Աւետարանական համայնքն ու Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւնը յանձնառու են վերոյիշեալ հաւատամքներուն եւ ՀՀՀի միջոցաւ անոնց իրագործման:

Շնորհակալութիւն եւ բարի երթ ՀՀՀին:

Չաւեն Խանճեան
Մայիս 27, 2016

George Takach, AMAA Controller Retires After Seventeen Years of Faithful Service

By Louisa Janbazian

George Takach, AMAA Controller, retired in August after serving the Association for the past seventeen years.

Soon after the headquarters of the Association moved to its current location in Paramus in 1998, the position of Controller was established. Among many applicants, George Takach was chosen and hired by the late Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, the Executive Director of the Association and Andy Torigian, the chair of the Personnel Committee, to be the first Controller of AMAA. As Controller, Mr. Takach was responsible for the financial records of the Association, a critical function that requires complex record keeping and controls. As a seasoned professional accountant and controller, Mr. Takach proved to be more than suitable for his task. He served the Association capably and faithfully gaining the respect and the love of the office staff, the Board of Directors and many of the AMAA members, who came to know him during his service.

George Takach and his wife Ellen have two sons and four grandchildren. In his retirement years George is looking forward to spending more time with his family, especially his grandchildren.

"As we thank George for a rewarding tenure at AMAA and wish him a happy retirement, we are pleased to announce that Lisa Sudibya, who has worked with George for the past 15 years as AMAA Accountant, has assumed the position of Controller. With her knowledge and experience, the AMAA is confident that Lisa will prove to be the best candidate to take on this important role providing a smooth transition," said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO.



AMAA Controller George Takach.

ԿԱՆՏՈՒԼԱԾ ԾԱՌԱՅԵԼՈՒ

Վեր. Դոկտ. Ալեքսիս Պոլսեթան

«Եղբայրներ, ձեզմե եօթը հոգի ընտրեցէ՛ք՝ բարի վկայուած, Սուրբ Հոգիով եւ իմաստութիւնով լեցուն, որպէս զի զանոնք այս գործին վրայ դնենք» (Գործք Առաքելոց 5:3):

Առաջին Հայ Աւետարանաբան Եկեղեցին հիմնուեցաւ Յուլիս 1, 1846 Թ.ին – ասկէ 170 տարիներ առաջ, Թուրքիոյ մէջ 37 այր եւ 3 կին մարդերով: Հիմնադիրները, հիմնուած Սուրբ Գիրքին վրայ, մի քանի հիմնական սկզբունքներ որդեգրեցին, ինչպէս՝ Քրիստոս փրկութեան համար բաւարար է, ամէն հաւատացեալ քահանայ է, Սուրբ Գիրքը գերակայ է եւ անհատին անձնական հաղորդակցութիւնը Քրիստոսի հետ:

Հոս «ամէն հաւատացեալ քահանայ է» սկզբունքը վեր պիտի առնենք:

Այս սկզբունքը կարելոր է որովհետեւ կը հաստատէ թէ Քրիստոս բաւարար է մեզ փրկելու եւ միջնորդելու Աստուծոյ եւ մարդուն, մարդուն եւ Աստուծոյ միջեւ (Ա. Տիմոթէոս 2.5): Այս կը նշանակէ, թէ՛ որովհետեւ Քրիստոս Իր խաչելութիւնով, մահով եւ յարութիւնով մեզ Աստուծոյ հետ հաշտեցուց, այլեւ՝ Քրիստոսէ զատ ուրիշ Փրկիչի եւ Միջնորդի պէտք չունինք, իւրաքանչիւր հաւատացեալ Աստուծոյ հետ ուղղակի յարաբերութիւն կրնայ ունենալ – իւրաքանչիւր հաւատացեալ ինք իր քահանան է, եւ Աստուծոյ ծառայելու կանչուած է՝ մինչ իր նմաններուն կը ծառայէ:

Սուրբ գրային հատուածը (Գործք Առաքելոց 5:1-7) այս սկզբունքին մէկ գեղեցիկ օրինակն է: Նախ՝ հարցին եւ ապա՝ լուծումին անդրադառնանք:

Ա. Նախ՝ հարցը: Ի՞նչ էր հարցը: Հարցը հետեւեալն էր: Առաջին դարու եկեղեցիին մէջ թէ՛ Հրեայ եւ թէ՛ Հելլենախօս (Յունախօս) անդամներ կային: Երբ եկեղեցիին անդամներուն թիւը շատցաւ, Հելլենախօս որբեւարիները տրտունջ ըրին, թէ՛ իրենք հաւասար օժանդակութիւն չէին ստանար: Կարծէք եկեղեցիին մէջ դասակարգեր եւ նախասիրուած անձեր կային:

Բ. Ապա՝ լուծումը: Ի՞նչ էր լուծումը: Լուծումը հետեւեալն էր: Առաքեալները հարցը չանտեսեցին: Անմիջապէս եկեղեցիին անդամները հաւաքեցին եւ ըսին. «Ձեզմէ եօթը հոգի ընտրեցէ՛ք՝ բարի վկայուած, Սուրբ

Հոգիով եւ իմաստութիւնով լեցուն, որպէս զի զանոնք այս գործին վրայ դնենք»: Առաքեալներուն խօսքը եկեղեցիի անդամներուն հաճելի երեւցաւ: Հետեւաբար անոնք եօթը անձեր ընտրեցին:

Հոս կարելոր է տեսնել, թէ՛ այս եօթը անձերը վկայեալ անձեր չէին – բարձր ուսում կամ գիտութիւն չունէին: Քարոզիչներ կամ ուսուցիչներ պիտի չըլլային: Անոնք որբեւարիներուն օժանդակութիւն պիտի բաժնէին:

Կարելոր է տեսնել նաեւ, թէ՛ այս եօթը անձերը չընտրուեցան որովհետեւ այս կամ այն առաջնորդը կը ճանչնային: Անոնք «հաւատքով ու Սուրբ Հոգիով լեցուն մարդեր» էին: Անոնց հաւատքը եւ Սուրբ Հոգիով լեցուած ըլլալը անոնց յատկանիշներն էին: Դիրք ու պաշտօն փնտոող անձեր չէին, այլ՝ վստահելի ու բարի վկայուած անձեր էին:

Առաւել կարելոր է տեսնել, թէ՛ երբ եկեղեցիին անդամները եօթը անձերը ընտրեցին, առաքեալները ձեռքերնին անոնց վրայ դնելով աղօթեցին – զիրենք յատուկ գործ ընելու ղրկեցին, Աստուծոյ օրհնութիւնը անոնց հայցելով՝ զիրենք Աստուծոյ ծառայելու ղրկեցին: Վերջապէս, կարելոր է նաեւ տեսնել, թէ՛ երբ առաքեալները եւ եկեղեցիի անդամները ամէն բան համաձայնութիւնով կատարեցին, Աստուած եկեղեցին առաւել օրհնեց՝ Աստուծոյ խօսքը աճեցաւ, աշակերտներուն թիւը խիստ շատցաւ եւ քահանաներէն շատեր Քրիստոսի սկսան հաւատալ:

Երանի թէ առաջին դարու եկեղեցիին կեանքէն սորվինք, որպէս զի Աստուծոյ օրհնութիւնները վայելենք՝ Աստուծոյ խօսքը մեր եկեղեցիին մէջ աճի, ու մեր եկեղեցիին անդամները եւ Քրիստոսի հաւատացողները շատնան: □



BOOKS

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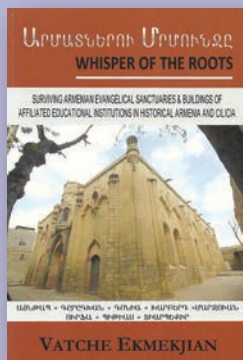
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Harry Balukjian

Harry Balukjian, former AMAA Board member, passed away at his residence in Asbury Methodist Village, Gaithersburg MD, on June 29, 2016 at the age of 90.



The eldest of three children, Harry was born in Philadelphia, PA to Pusant and Esther Balukjian, active members of the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church. Pusant was a charter member of the Church, an elder and Bible teacher. At the age of nine and for a number of years thereafter, Harry was an enthusiastic builder of model airplanes. He credited this hobby with his development of manual skills, patience and pride of workmanship that later led him to pursue a career in engineering.

The day after graduating from high school, Harry enlisted in the United States Navy. He was originally assigned to the Navy Torpedo Testing Station near Newport, RI and eventually was sent to Okinawa in April 1945. After being honorably discharged in 1946, Harry attended Lafayette College and graduated with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. At Lafayette, Harry met faculty member John Markarian and was instrumental in introducing Dr. Markarian as a candidate for Founding President of Haigazian University, an achievement that Harry cherished the rest of his life.

Harry's first job was with the Westinghouse Corporation, helping design gas turbines. During this time he attended Drexel University, eventually earning his Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering. In 1957 he took a position with the Franklin Institute Research and Development Lab. In 1966 Harry accepted a position with the Navy, working in the submarine branch as an engineer. As a result of that position he relocated to Bethesda, MD. In 1974 Harry joined the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, working in reactor licensing and retired from the NRC in 2002.

Harry was an active member of the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, MD until his move to Gaithersburg in 2012. He remained an active member of the Gideons until his passing. Harry belonged to the Armenian Evangelical Fellowship of Greater Washington, and for the last seven years of its existence he was the principal organizer of its Sunday afternoon gatherings, held three times a year for worship, instruction from guest speakers/preachers and fellowship, providing an opportunity for Armenian Protestants as well as others in the region, to reconnect with their heritage and the Armenian community worldwide.

During his lifetime, Harry enjoyed classical music and played the violin in church and

with family and friends, as well as performing in community orchestras. His many international travels were not limited to tourism. He enjoyed opportunities to connect with his ancestral roots, visit relatives and mission sites as well as to volunteer his engineering skills in Armenia to help the country develop nuclear energy programs.

Harry was proud of his Armenian heritage and helped people and institutions in need in Armenia, the Middle East and beyond through generous donations to the Armenian Missionary Association of America, also serving on its Board for two decades. A devoted member of Christian Endeavor since his youth, Harry often attended the organization's international conferences, including the one held in Singapore in 2002. Part of that trip included his first return to Okinawa since WWII, where he was hosted by a Christian school he supported financially for decades.

Many who knew Harry describe him as mild-mannered, caring, conscientious, unpretentious, principled, equally cautious and courageous, eager to learn, striving to improve himself and his world, and, despite self-doubt about having accomplished enough, remaining full of hope.

Harry is survived by his brother, Robert, of Havertown, PA, the children of his sister Marion Sarian (deceased) nephews David Sarian (Linda) of Parkesburg, PA and Dan Sarian (Rebecca) of Littleton, CO, and niece Susan Hein (Gary), also of Littleton, along with six grandnephews/nieces. A private graveside service was held July 14 at Arlington Cemetery in Upper Darby, PA. All are welcome to attend a service in Harry's memory on Saturday, October 8, at 2 p.m. at Fourth Presbyterian Church, 5500 River Rd, Bethesda, MD 20816. Contributions in Harry Balukjian's memory may be sent to Armenian Missionary Association of America, 31 West Century Rd, Paramus, NJ 07652 or Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church, 100 N. Edmonds Ave., Havertown, PA 19083. □

Dovey Cartozian

Dovey Cartozian of Sherman Oaks, CA, a long-time member of the United Armenian Congregational Church (UACC) of Los Angeles, CA, passed away on August 22, 2016, just a month before her 100th birthday.

Dovey was born in Fresno, CA on September 24, 1916 to Kharpertsi parents. When she was very young she and her family moved to Los Angeles and in 1933 she married Avedis Cartozian at the Gethsemane Armenian Church. In 1934 they were



blessed with their first child, Victoria, followed by three sons, David, Phillip and Harold, and were later blessed with grandchildren.

After the end of World War II in 1945, Avedis and Dovey purchased their current home in Sherman Oaks and Dovey lived there until the very end, tending her garden daily.

At the UACC, Dovey served in many ways over the years. She was a member of the Board of Deacons, organized and helped with mailings and, most importantly, prepared the elements for Communion whenever it was served for many years. This was a mission that she treasured.

For years she was a member of the Catering Committee, which prepared food for luncheons, teas, memorial meals and weddings. After keeping track of every penny for many years, the Committee realized one day that they had enough money to purchase a beautiful grand piano for the sanctuary... and they did!

Dovey was a long-time member of the UACC Ladies Guild which later merged with the Ladies Aid, and then with Jr. Women, to become what is known today as the United Women. She worked both individually, and in cooperation with others, decorating tables, preparing food, and sponsoring many church events. She loved and served the Church since it was built 53 years ago. Dovey and Avedis decorated the altar every Sunday with lush potted plants and flowers from their garden. Before that she was active at the Gethsemane Church, one of three churches that merged to form UACC.

Dovey greatly enjoyed traveling. One of her favorite trips was a tour of the Holy Land in 1990.

After Avedis passed away in 2004, Dovey continued her mission of providing plants and flowers for the sanctuary altar. Above all, Dovey never wavered in her faith and thankfulness to God. She taught her children to serve God and the Church with dedication and cheerfulness and was always an inspiration to family, friends and her congregation.

As Dovey once said, "I give thanks to the Good Lord every day for my blessings and I leave everything in the Lord's Hands." May God bless her memory. □

Rev. Emmanuel Darakjian

Rev. Emmanuel Darakjian, father of AMAA Board President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, went to be with the Lord on August 22, 2016, at his home in Chicago, IL. He was born in Aintab, Turkey on January 19, 1920 to Pastor Nazareth and Aroussiag Darakjian during the heroic war of resistance in Aintab.



In 1926, when Emmanuel was only 6 years old, his father succumbed to malaria at age 41 leaving behind a wife and five very young boys ages one to ten. The family moved to Aleppo where Aroussiag's brother Nejib Shirikjian lived. Nejib helped the family survive in these difficult circumstances.

Emmanuel received his elementary education at the Bethel School in Aleppo and went on to Aleppo College graduating in 1939. That same year, at the ripe age of 19, he was sent to Kessab to serve as school principal for one year. In 1940 he entered the American University of Beirut and also attended the Near East School of Theology (NEST). In 1944 he received his B.A. in Theology and went back to Aleppo to serve as Principal in both Bethel and Emmanuel schools. He married Mary Cholakian, a teacher at the Bethel school, in 1948.

In Syria Rev. Darakjian served at the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Kessab, Ekiz Oluk and Keorkuneh as well as the Armenian Evangelical Church of Eshrefieh (also known as Davoudieh). In Davoudieh Rev. Darakjian embarked on a major project to build a church, a school and a manse, where he was also the principal of the school.

Rev. Darakjian and his family moved to Lebanon in 1966 where he assumed the role of Principal at the Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian Secondary School in Nor Marash, Bourj Hammoud. In 1968, Rev. Darakjian received an invitation to serve as Pastor of the Assyrian Evangelical Church near Beirut on a part-time basis, which gave him the opportunity to reenter NEST as a student one more time, and acquire the degree of Bachelor in Divinity, and later the degree of Master in Divinity.

After the Lebanese civil war erupted, Rev. Darakjian left the Near East in 1975 and moved to the United States with his family settling in Chicago. There being no empty pulpits in the Armenian Evangelical churches in the U.S. at that time, Rev. Darakjian found a position as an editorial assistant at Commerce Clearing House, a company that published books for the legal profession. In Chicago he attended the Armenian Evangelical Church and often participated in the service by preaching.

In addition to being an effective preacher and a good shepherd to his flock, Rev. Darakjian had the brain of a scientist and the hands of an engineer. He could fix almost anything that broke down in the house and sometimes would invent gadgets that would become useful in the house. His knowledge of construction came in very handy when the church complex was being built in Eshrefieh, Aleppo. He was also a good money manager and was able to find the resources to build the church complex for a small congregation whose members were of modest means.

He spoke five languages fluently and in general would conduct bilingual church services in Armenian and Turkish.

He was a big fan of classical music. As a teenager he taught himself to play the violin; in his desire to advance quickly, he would practice 5-6 hours daily to the point where his ears would hurt. His solution – he would plug cotton in his ears and continue practicing.

He was a dedicated man to his family, his church and to the work of the Lord, and we know that he is now enjoying the presence of the Lord.

In 2015 Rev. Darakjian lost his lifetime partner Mary after being married for 67 years.

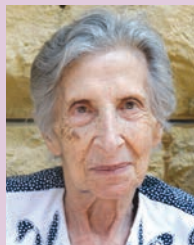
The funeral service for Rev. Darakjian was held August 26 at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago, IL. He is survived by his daughter Arpy Sahakian and her husband Curtis of Skokie, IL, his sons Dr. Nazareth Darakjian and his wife Dr. Ani of La Canada, CA and Dr. Hrair and his wife Dr. Nadia of Tarzana, CA, his daughter Suzy Darakjian of Chicago, IL, his grandchildren Lory Sahakian, R.N., Edward Sahakian, Rev. Haig Darakjian, Dr. Ara Darakjian, Christopher Darakjian, Danielle Darakjian and his brother Rev. Barkev and his wife Agnes Darakjian of Glendale, CA. Memorial donations may be made to the AMAA.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. □

Nver Trashian Haidostian

Nver Trashian Haidostian passed away peacefully in the residence of her son, Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, President of Haigazian University, in Beirut on July 28, 2016 surrounded by family members.

Born in 1930, Nver was the third child of four in the devout Christian family of Stepan and Trvanda Trashian and grew up in the faith in Aleppo at the Armenian Evangelical Brotherhood Church. Upon graduation from high school, she taught at the two schools she attended: the Armenian Evangelical Bethel School and the Genatz School. When she was young, the Trashian family home was one of prayer meetings, hymn-singing and Christian fellowship among neighbors. When the family moved to Lebanon, Nver's teaching career continued in the Armenian Evangelical Gertmenian Elementary School until she married Pastor and Educator, the late Rev. Loutfi Haidostian. The family then moved back to Aleppo for two years in 1958 for educational service at the Bethel School.



Nver took a short break from work in the early 1960s, and in 1966 she enthusiastically joined her husband's ministry in the Lebanese city of Tripoli until his retirement in 1983 and even beyond. In Mina, Tripoli, Nver taught kindergarten and elementary classes, ran the Sunday school program of the Tripoli Armenian Evangelical Church, played the organ at church, organized a small church choir, and ably participated in Rev. Loutfi's daily editorial, hymnological and translation work for the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. During these years, she became known for her home visitations, resource preparation for church women and children, translation of the daily devotional Luys, and her active concern and incessant prayer for the needy.

As a retired couple, Nver and Badveli Loutfi ministered in Beirut, Lebanon, Homs, Aleppo, and Kessab, Syria, for a number of years.

During her later years in life, she devoted her time to reading the Bible, the daily Armenian newspapers, and every single Armenian Evangelical publication she got a hold of, including the Chanasser, the Badanegan Artzakank, and the AMAA News.

Even to the last days of her life, she kept the Bible concordance, a number of dictionaries, and various types of stationery handy so that she could write notes of Christian encouragement to all people near and far who she considered part of her life.

Nver is survived by her daughter Esther Kilaghbian, and son, the Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, both residing and serving in Beirut and four grandchildren.

The funeral service took place at the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Beirut on July 29. □

Lydia Ichkhanian

Lydia Ichkhanian of Los Angeles, CA was born in Beirut, Lebanon on December 5, 1936. Her parents, Khoren and Arousiag Pilibossian from Yozgat, were survivors of the Armenian Genocide. She had three siblings, a sister, Mariam, and two brothers, Sahag and Avedis, who is the last member of that family still alive.



At a very young age, Lydia was involved in her school and church and served the Lord in many capacities. She was a graduate of the Armenian Evangelical College of Beirut, where she was an excellent student.

Lydia and her husband Dr. Arsene met when he was in his final year of medical school and were married on July 22, 1955. The unconditional love and undying respect that they had for one another was an inspiration to all. They were both devout Christians and served the Lord hand in hand both in the Armenian Evangelical Church of Nor Marash in Beirut, Lebanon and after moving to the United States at the Armenia Cilicia Evangelical Church in Pasadena, CA.

Two things that were most important to Lydia were being with her family and serving in her church. Lydia was also a loyal friend to many and she kept in touch by calling them, even those who lived overseas. She cared for their well-being and prayed for them.

Seven years ago Lydia was diagnosed with colon cancer which she fought with quiet dignity and grace. Undergoing surgeries and countless chemotherapy treatments did not weaken her spirit. She continued to serve the Lord in her church as the Chairperson of the Ladies' Auxiliary, the Dorcus Guild and Hye Couples.

Lydia was also a member of the Church choir. She had a beautiful voice and loved to sing hymns.

A year ago, the life-changing event of the passing of her husband made it more and more difficult for her to fight the cancer. Within the last few months, her condition increasingly got worse and on August 10 Lydia went to be with the Lord. She kept her faith until the end.

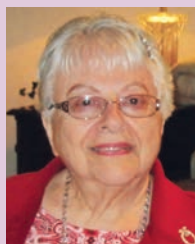
Lydia is survived by her three children, Berj, Suzy and Paul and four grandchildren, Michelle, Nicole, Andrew and Bryan. The funeral service was held on Thursday, August 18, at Old North Church of Forest Lawn Cemetery, Hollywood Hills, CA. Memorial donations can be made to AMAA.

A few days before her passing, she said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Now she is with her Lord Jesus Christ praising His Holy name in His presence where there's no more pain and suffering. □

Helene Philibosian Sarkissian

Helene Pilibosian Sarkissian of Watertown, MA, died on December 5, 2015 at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, MA. She was 82.

Helene, owner of Ohan Press, was born in Boston, MA, to survivors of the Armenian Genocide. After graduating from Watertown



High School, she attended Harvard University and graduated with a degree in humanities in 1960, and married Hagop Sarkissian. She was the first woman editor of the newspaper *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. The 50th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was commemorated in 1965 and it released a flood of articles on the subject. On April 24, the day of the commemoration, she published a special issue about the Armenian Genocide and sent it to members of Congress, President Lyndon Johnson and Vice President Hubert Humphrey. Her editorial, "Out of Smoldering Ashes," was subsequently published in the Congressional Record. She also wrote about Lord Byron's study of the Armenian language at the Mekhitarist Monastery in Venice, about the history of Watertown, about the Armenian collection at the Watertown Public Library, and about the federal grants for a bilingual program in the public schools.

She traveled to Europe and Lebanon twice, then founded Ohan Press in 1983 with the publication of *Carvings from an Heirloom: Oral History Poems*. She then published *At Quarter Past Reality: New and Selected Poems* (first prize from Writer's Digest), and *History's Twists: The Armenians* (honorable mention). Her poems have been published in many magazines and anthologies, winning several prizes. Her early poetry has been cited in the Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature. *They Called Me Mustafa: Memoir of an Immigrant*, which she co-wrote with her father and published, was honored at a Massachusetts State

House commemoration and was licensed by Alexander Street Press for an electronic database. She published *My Literary Profile: A Memoir*, which won an honorable mention from the New England Book Festival 2012, *A New Orchid Myth*, and two posthumous books of poems have been recently published by her son Robert Sarkissian, entitled *Candor Candy: Global Poems*, and *Planet Tome Reborn*.

Helene was an active member of the Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown, MA, and a member of the Armenian Missionary Association of America. She and her husband Hagop were awarded a Certificate of Life Membership in grateful recognition of generous contributions to the Christian Mission and Service Ministries of the AMAA on July 31, 1992. Helene was also a member of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, the New England Poetry Club, and Boston's Museum of Fine Arts.

Helene is survived by her husband of 55 years, Hagop Sarkissian, daughter Sharon Hekimian and her husband Gregory Hekimian, son Robert Sarkissian and his wife Audrey Dow, grandson Joshua Hekimian and his wife Sara Hekimian, and granddaughter Emily Overstreet and her husband Simeon Overstreet. She was predeceased by her parents Khachador and Yeghsa Pilibosian and her sister Lucia Barooshian.

Funeral services were held at the Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown, MA, on December 14, 2015. □

It is with deep sorrow that we share the sad news of the passing of Past AMAA President and Board Member Albert Momjian, Esq. on July 11, 2016 after a brief illness. For many decades, Albert Momjian faithfully served the Armenian Missionary Association of America, sitting on its Board of Directors, acting as its Solicitor, and serving as its President from 1993-1997.

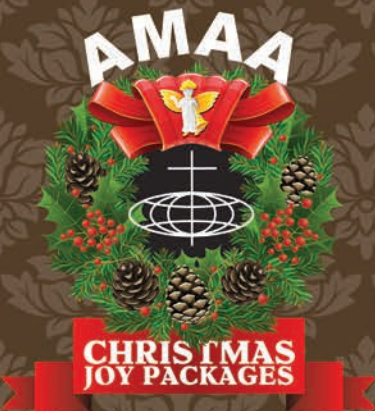
A Special AMAA News issue will be published in October dedicated to Al Momjian.



The AMAA Board of Directors and the staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| * Ruby Abrahamian
Paramus, NJ | * Hasmig Karamanougian
Fort Lee, NJ | * Agnes Salibian
Rochester, NY |
| * Abe Berberian
Goionia, Brazil | * Armenak Kutchukian
Troy, NY | * Ann Sarkisian
Torrence CA |
| * Martin A. Boujicanian
North Las Vegas, NV | * Lucia Saatjian
Sao Paulo, Brazil | * Vartan Sarmazian
Dee Why (Sydney), NSW, Australia |
| * Alice Gratchian
Shelton, CT | * Vagsan Sahakian
Los Angeles, CA | |

* Memorials designated for AMAA



The Armenian Missionary Association of America Invites You To Bring Christmas Joy to Our Children in Armenia & Karabagh

Since the early 1990s, the AMAA and the Evangelical Church of Armenia have organized annual Christmas Programs in over 40 towns in Armenia and Karabagh to share God's love and bring Christmas joy to thousands of children. Specially-made Christmas packages are distributed by 'Santa Claus' leaving everyone smiling and with the indelible mark of the joy of Christmas in their hearts! Your generous donations will help us continue this special ministry to our children in the Homeland.

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE A BLESSED CHRISTMAS SEASON FOR ORPHANS AND NEEDY CHILDREN.

Enclosed is my donation of

☐ \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$30 ☐ \$40 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

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Make check payable to: Armenian Missionary Association of America, memo: Christmas Joy. Mail to: 31 W. Century Rd., Paramus, NJ 07652 or make a secure donation online at www.AMAA.org



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Rev. Aharon Shirajian's Armenian Orphanage Aleppo, Syria

Standing L to R: Robinson Keyishian, Mihran Cherkezian, Manam Keyishian, Perlanty Keyishian (**her son Archie Cherkezian was AMAA Board President 1976-1978**), John Keyishian (**AMAA Board President 1964-1966**), Yughaper Kalfaian. Seated L to R: Almast Boyajian, Rev. Aharon Shirajian (**founder of the Orphanage**), Doudou Keyishian, Krikor Keyishian. (photo courtesy of John Cherkezian).